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THE MAN IN THE SHADOW

RICHARD WASHBURN CHILD

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"I THINK THAT IS A WONDERFUL THING TO LOOK UPON," SHE CONTINUED.

THE MAN IN THE SHADOW

BY

RICHARD WASHBURN CHILD

AUTHOR OF "JIM HANDS"

ILLUSTRATED

V. G.

New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1911

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THE MAN IN THE SHADOW

They pulled with the strength that was in them,
  But 'twas not for the pewter cup,
And not for the fame it would win them
  When the length of the race was up;
For the college stood by the river,
  And they heard with cheeks that glowed
The voice of the coxswain calling,
  At the end of the race, "Well Rowed!"

—*From a class poem.*

THE late afternoon sunlight slanted down into the busy street through the trees of the Public Garden; flower-beds behind the iron fence appeared in the fresh green background as blustering dabs of brilliant color; the air was soft and clean, and smelled of the season. It had been the sort of day which whispers of other scenes, old faces, of gentle memories and painted possibilities. Now along the street came the ebb-tide of the day's work swept out from the business part of the city and jostling homeward. There was a leavening of summer attire in the stream; straw hats bobbed above the crowd, and women's gowns were soft and bright. It was spring.

Among the home-goers was a man distinguished little from the rest by a refined and patient expression. His shoulders sloped as if they had borne much; his

eyes were open in a wide stare as if astounded at the repetition of life's misfortunes; and his clothes, from his derby hat, shiny from his wife's endless brushings, to his shoes, flattened by the monotony of his daily life, told of the practice of much respectable economy. Trouble had felt of his throat, one would say, but never had succeeded in throttling him. There was a quiet reserved strength in the furrows of his forehead and in the solidity of his chin, and the wrinkles at the corner of his blue eyes, extending back to the gray hairs, declared that there was a fund of persistent hope in Carter Clews.

Looking up suddenly from the plodding of his way, he saw four men coming down the steps of a hotel toward an open carriage which had drawn up to the curb. Three were inclined to the stoutness of middle age, and all were laughing prosperously; they were dressed as well and as plainly as affluent American gentlemen, except for gay hatbands, the badge of membership to some college club, and were chatting vociferously of Commencement dinners and baseball games and class reunions; it was evident that they were four successful men on a holiday, and straining to be young again. The clean-shaven man with a crooked nose addressed his tall distinguished companion as "Newt," and "Newt" in turn spoke of "twenty-fifth annual dinners" to the short man with the prominent ears who was getting into the carriage; while the fourth,

whose manners were nervous, dyspeptic, and querulous, shifted his feet with constitutional impatience, and at the same time carried a flickering smile of inherent geniality. An air of importance seemed to surround them so that, as they stood on the sidewalk under the hotel portico, the passing wayfarers stepped aside to avoid the charmed circle, some scowling enviously, others smiling tolerantly and sympathetically.

Carter Clews smiled with boyish pleasure. For one of them was "Newt" Riggs, who used to row on the crew and was now a corporation attorney in Chicago; and there was Billy Drowson, who used to flunk examinations as easily as if he had meant to do it; and the third was Joe Crane, who was making his two hundred thousand a year in metal-refining in Colorado; and the little man was Lapham, the surgeon, who had been marshal of the class. It had been a long time since he had seen any one of them, but he recognized two by their recent pictures in the newspapers, and the others by the similarity to their youthful appearance, which still lurked beneath the changes of twenty-five years.

The last had just seated himself comfortably in the carriage when Clews succeeded in pushing his way into the gap they had left in the crowd. Both Joseph Crane and Lapham, seeing him take a step toward them, opened their eyes in innocent surprise; neither of them recognized him. He stopped for a moment of

embarrassed hesitation, and in that moment he felt with a sharp old pang, which years of attempted philosophy had not dulled, that he belonged among them no more. They were successful men.

Upon the four, settled luxuriously in the ample corners of the victoria, there fell a bath of the warm slanting light of the spring sunset, but Carter Clews had stepped back into the gray shadow of the portico. There was no charmed circle around him; a clerk, in haste to get home to his evening meal, bumped him rudely. The carriage started away with a laugh and the scrape of a wheel on the curb.

"Say!" said a man who had been leaning against the wall with the vulgar grace of those who loaf about the doorways of hotels, "did you see that short feller with the Panama hat? That's William Drowson, the reform governor of ——"

"Oh, thank you," said Clews, nodding gravely. "He was my roommate when we were in college."

Once more he started on his way. His daily trudge to and from his office was the result of a calculation that enough car fare was saved each year to buy an extra gown for his daughter. It was characteristic of him.

When he turned into the street where he lived he noticed that in spite of the struggling little grass plots in front of the houses and the soft spring-sweetened air of the evening, the scene was more obnoxious than ever. Before he reached the door of the new yellow brick apart-

ment, squeezed between two old houses to whose bow fronts still clung the suggestion of a respectability long since dead and buried, the incident of his first meeting with his four old classmates had caused him a host of bitter reflections and comparisons. He found himself defending his self-respect. All the teasing of life that he had endured through long years now assailed him as never before.

Life had toyed with him, showing her splendors and snatching them from under his fingers; had taught him culture and then laughed at him.

He lived in an apartment, since suburban life was wearing and expensive, but he never had quite got over his contempt for this sort of abode or manner of living. For years he had periodically told his wife what sort of a country place he would have, always beginning, "When we get on our feet and things are straightened out —" The description included an avenue overhung with trees, and was generally illustrated by a hasty pencil sketch of a very expensive house, and interrupted by a dissertation on interior decoration and fine rugs and beauty and comfort. His wife never failed to listen to him half entranced, and yet in need of all her courage, since as time flew by it seemed a greater and greater shame that this dream, like the others, would never come true. Sometimes he spoke of Edith's "coming out," which, though absurd from the first because of their circumstances and seclusion, became triply ridiculous

when his daughter had grown too old for it. They were surrounded by inferior persons; inferior persons occupied the apartment below them and had a copy of the *Rubaiyat* on their parlor table, overbound in soft leather, with a claret stain on the back. He treated them with such unruffled dignity and courtesy that they said he must be a gentleman, and they always spoke as if a gentleman were a species nearly extinct.

The rattle of his key brought his wife and daughter to the door, and the usual smiles and kisses of welcome, which made each home-coming seem a special occasion and above the rank of an everyday occurrence, reminded him of the old duty of keeping his feelings to himself. He raised his head, put on his armor of patience, and girded up his loins with the vestiges of the cheer and humor which had years before made him such an attractive boy.

"Was there any mail to-day?" he asked.

"A note from Brown, Culver, and Co.," replied his wife, furtively. She was a little woman with great vitality in her eyes.

"They want their money?" he asked.

"Yes."

"We'll have to get it together somehow, Alice. We always have. They've all been paid sooner or later, haven't they?" He was obviously anxious that his wife should not be troubled, and for the moment thoughtless of his own worry. It was just like him.

His daughter hastened to assist at the burial of an unpleasant subject. "There was a postal card came to-day for you, dad."

"Oh, yes," said Mrs. Clews; "it had been to all of the four places we have lived since we came back from Iowa, and so it was late in getting here."

"It was the announcement of the twenty-fifth anniversary dinner of your class," added Edith, taking his hat and following him into the front room.

"You've never been to the dinners," said his wife, somewhat anxiously. "You'll go to this one, won't you?"

"Where's the postal?" he asked, quietly.

"Do go, dad," urged Edith, pointing to the card on the mantel. "You belong there. Both mother and I have spoken of it. We don't like to have you forgotten." She put her hand upon her father's shoulder.

Clews took the card down, holding it under the light of the lamp on the centre-table. His fingers trembled a little as he read it.

"The last dinner I went to was in our Senior year, just before I graduated and went West," he said, after a moment. "I was toastmaster at that dinner. It was a spring night like this. I remember a little crowd of us sat under a tree in the college yard and talked until daylight. My stars, but the world looked good then! We promised each other half in fun that the one who got to be forty-five years old and wasn't success-

ful should jump into the river. And then we went up — all six of us — went up to my room for a cold bath, and I built a fire and heated the poker and burned my name into the mantelpiece, and the rest were rubbing themselves with towels."

"It's only six. The dinner's at eight. You'll have plenty of time, father," suggested Edith.

Clews did not hear; he was still holding the card under the light. Crane and Drowson and Riggs and Lapham and poor Wright, who had died the next year, had been there. He wondered whether it was because he was oversensitive that he had thrown away those old friendships. He remembered the meeting of the afternoon, and concluded it would have been embarrassing for them if they had recognized him; they would have known at once that there were very few mutual interests now, and would discern the same distinctions and differences which had that afternoon seemed to push him back into the shadow of the portico.

He tossed the card aside. His wife could see upon his face, which now was in the full light of the lamps, the unmistakable sign that the accumulation of years of disappointment was no longer to be contained in silence. Expressions of bitterness and passion she had never before seen now played about his mouth. All her sympathy went out to him; the weakness was only human, and she knew what regret it would mean to him when he had marred the unbroken record of his patience. She

could not bear to see the one outburst of a vessel proved so strong. She turned away.

"I've been a miserable fizzle!" he cried. "Unknown and forgotten because I deserve it. I've got to die like a rat in an everlasting obscurity!"

Edith looked straight at him as he dropped into a chair, her eyes wide with astonishment and reproach. "That is not true!" said she, softly, and with sudden understanding.

"Perhaps it's a bad dream!" he shouted, jumping once more to his feet. "It's been my fault. No wonder I'm forgotten! Everybody flocks around a victory, but who cares where the man is who's failed to do big things? Once he marched in the front line promising a great deal, and now he's got to watch the procession from the sidewalk!" He folded his arms and stared straight ahead into the gloomy shadows of the corner. "It would be better," he began again, "if a man can't make himself felt and has got to walk around unknown — like a ghost of what was in him once — to keep his promise and —"

"Don't!" cried Edith, awed by his unwonted state of mind.

He looked up at her quickly, and seeing the trembling of her upper lip, drew a long breath and squared his shoulders. "Well, perhaps we all have our compensations," he said. "Isn't dinner ready?" He was looking out the window into the smoky dusk of the city.

"Ours is ready," answered his daughter, firmly. "You are going to your class dinner, aren't you?"

"Oh, I think I won't go this time," he replied, carelessly, drawing a newspaper from his pocket. "Perhaps next year —"

"Oh, yes," begged his wife, stepping out of the shadow. "For me!"

Clews smiled indulgently, and looked at his watch.

"Come," said Edith, seeing the momentary advantage. "You've just time to dress."

"I'll get your evening clothes. They're put away," added his wife.

"They won't know what to think of the light. It's been a long while since I had them on," Clews said, yielding. "It's been some years since they were out of camphor."

When he appeared in them a little later they were wrinkled and there was an obvious scarcity of room at the waist. He looked doubtfully at himself in the mirror. Then suddenly he smiled. "I've had them ever since we were married," said he. "Their style looks rather quaint, doesn't it? But I've had some very happy minutes inside the old coat. Do you remember this tie, Alice?"

She examined it critically and then smiled. "Why, for mercy's sake! That was the first thing I ever made you," said she, happily.

"I hadn't forgotten," he answered, and Edith fol-

lowed him to the door with her hand thrust into his arm.

"Crawling out of my hole!" he muttered so that only his own ears heard it. As he went slowly out into the hallway and down the noisy wooden stairs his wife and his daughter leaned over the banisters, looking at him anxiously.

The night was so soft and alluring that many people, driven from the breathless warmth of indoors, had come out to perch on their steps; through open windows came the rattle of pianos or the sound of phonographs. Those whom Clews met on the street hardly could be said to be walking; their gait was always a contented amble. Vigorous hurdy-gurdies were playing in the light from the show-windows of drug stores; policemen stopped on corners to take off their helmets and wipe their foreheads. Clews was the only one in a hurry.

At last he turned the corner into the avenue, and beyond the rows of houses, many of which were dark and deserted for the summer, shone the gay lights of the hotel. As he looked he saw a little group of laughing men going up the steps, and although he knew he was already late, he walked over into the mall and seated himself on a park bench in the shadow of a statue erected to some public man. He nodded to this statue as if it were a former acquaintance, and after a few moments he got up again, squared his shoulders, and walked briskly across the street and up the steps into the lobby.

The clerk leaned over the desk toward him. "Seventy-six?" he asked. Clews nodded, and then said, in a strong, carrying voice, "Yes, my class — seventy-six."

"Just down at the end of that corridor," directed the other, and Clews drew off his coat as he walked.

There were others standing with him at the check-room who nodded to him. "Did you go to the game?" asked one.

"No," said Clews, guiltily. "How did it come out?"

"Great guns! don't you know how it came out? Why, we beat 'em! My boy plays first base. I go to all the games."

"I wish I could—I wish I'd gone to-day. But my work is rather confining," explained Clews. "I have a daughter," he added, as if to even accounts. "And of course if I had a son he'd be out there at the University too."

"There are several prominent members of the class here to-night," returned the other, changing the subject. "Drowson is here, and Crane is toastmaster. We're late, I think."

"Yes," answered Clews. He could hear the clinking and the confused clamor of many voices beyond the reception-room. With his new acquaintance he followed a knot of men who opened the door, exposing the two large tables filled with diners. The noise within burst out as if impatient of confinement, and drew the

attention of several guests of the hotel, who peered down the corridor with mild curiosity.

When the man who was with Clews hesitated for a moment, looking for a vacant seat, a dozen voices rose up to greet him, and several men stood up to shout to him boyishly, "Oh, Billy, here's a seat!" or, "Here you are, Lawton!"

Clews was dazed for a moment with the brilliance of the lights, the white linen, the black suits, and the flowers upon the tables. At that moment it seemed to him that he would give up all hope of other happiness to hear some one shout his name and call him to them. But their eyes were upon him merely to see who had come in, and he hurried to a vacant place to escape their stare.

When he looked up, having finished his oysters, he found he had seated himself far away from the speakers and at another table, but he could see, by looking down the length of the room, that Drowson and Crane were chatting together.

Clews was lonely. His neighbors on either side were engaged in an exchange of pleasantries with others across the table. Of the men who sat near him he remembered only two as acquaintances of undergraduate days, and the old associations recalled by their faces were so hazy that he was convinced that he had never known either of them well. One of them, a slight, wrinkled little man with eyeglasses, might have been

the coxswain of his dormitory crew, but he was not sure. They certainly did not recognize him. No one singled him out for a pleasant word. Once a broad-shouldered, beaming, red-haired stranger across the table, being unengaged for the moment, and seeing the expression on Clews's face, raised his glass and nodded an invitation to drink with him. Clews returned a good-natured smile. But it was too plain that the other had seen that he was lonely and unhappy; the act was obviously one of charity. There was no comfort in it. He reflected that there had been no necessity of giving himself the pain of sitting unrecognized and unknown among friends of old days, like Crane and the others who had never bothered to find him in his obscurity. It was to be expected that they should care nothing; human nature does not permit men to be interested in so commonplace a thing as failure. He determined grimly never to suffer another experience like this. "The world likes success and sunlight," he said to himself. "I'll fight it out alone after this, and in my own little corner." Bitterness of thought alternated with contempt for himself for being capable of bitter thinking.

A waiter finally thrust a demi-tasse of coffee deftly over Clews's elbow; it surprised him to note how swiftly the dinner had passed. Crane had introduced Drowson with an accompaniment of cheers and hand-clapping, and Drowson had made a speech which impressed every one, and Colingwood had been cajoled into singing "I'm

a Lonely Lubber on the Briny Deep," and had yielded with the same embarrassed excuses he put forth when the song was already famous in undergraduate days. Chairs were gradually moved back a little from the table, the room became foggy with the smoke that curled from the cigars. It was warm; shirt-bosoms lost their stiffness, and hands were reaching out for glasses of cool, sparkling wine, which seemed to taste too good to be harmful; a contented fulness and laughter tugged at nearly a hundred waistcoats. To Clews, straining to enter with the rest into the enjoyment, the hazy room, the mumble of voices and speeches, and the wilting roses beside his plate, all seemed to be the clearer details of an incoherent unreality.

Crane, the toastmaster, was rapping for silence. A group of men had gathered at the end of one of the tables, and were vainly and without harmony endeavoring to revive an old song they had once sung together in past years with some proficiency; when they had been suppressed by shouts of derision from the majority Crane spoke slowly and clearly.

"Before we break up," he said, "I want you to drink one more toast with me. We have toasted ourselves and each other, but this toast is to a man who is not here."

The interest and curiosity of every one was aroused; a few flares of matches to light fresh cigars made the only stir in the room. Even Clews, who had been looking at

the bottom of his coffee-cup, leaned back in his chair to listen; it was plainly going to be a eulogy of some classman who had died.

"Twenty-five years ago, after our last college dinner," began Crane, quietly, "there were six men in our class sitting together under a tree in the yard and talking about what we would do. We said we would all be successful at forty-five. If not, we were going to jump into the river. I was one of those men —"

"Why didn't you jump?" laughed a man who had just begun to listen.

"Billy Drowson was another," Crane went on, smiling, because he could afford to smile. "Wright was there — he died the next year. Then there was Lapham and Riggs. But there was another. He was a prominent figure in our class — a fine fellow — the smartest one of the six — very honorable and good-hearted. I will not name him. He is not here."

Clews gulped down the contents of his glass and shut his teeth hard.

"We all thought he would have a brilliant career. But perhaps he is more or less forgotten now. He came out of college and was married, and his father died and left him a mother and two sisters and an inheritance of debts. That cut him off from the professional schools and he went West, and I have found out that he went into a business where there was no chance in the world of advancement. But it had to be done because that

offered a way of bearing the burdens and obligations that were on him. It was just like him. It was an unselfish thing to do. Perhaps working to pay off his father's debts was quixotic, but it amounts to being well inside the limits of honor. It certainly needs no apologies. Then he had to take care of a wife and three others besides. His health became very bad — he used to work sixteen hours a day sometimes, and when he was forty years old he found himself very much out of order. Then he came back East. Part of his burdens had been removed, but it was too late to start life as he might have started it once. He had burned out in the service like a faithful, honest, well-made candle. His light had been dim, but it had also been steady. I suppose he is alive, although I don't know. But all of us who knew him best are sure that wherever he is he is still putting up a good fight, and though he hasn't got the cheers and the limelight, he's pulling mighty well! I know it!"

The room was very still as Crane paused. He had spoken slowly and with a boyish simplicity that commanded the eyes of all the men about the tables.

"I found out about him at this late day because I felt I had been a fool to let his friendship slip away from me simply because he had gone West, and the others who knew him as I knew him felt the same. We've tried to locate him, but we lost the scent after we found he had come back from Iowa. It was disappointing — because we had planned to go back to-night, Drowson

and Lapham and Riggs and myself and this other man, and sit under the tree in the yard where twenty-five years ago we'd promised to reach success, before we came back to attend this dinner. I feel sure that this missing man — this lost member of the class, I might say, for I can't find any one who knows where he is — ought to be there. We think he comes as near success as any one of us."

Crane stopped for a moment, and, leaning over, brushed a little pile of cigar ashes off the table-cloth. Clews, now hot with an unnamable emotion, now cold with excitement, sat gazing with motionless staring eyes across the length of the room toward Crane. The latter was red with the embarrassment of a subject which he knew was too big for him; Clews was very white.

The speaker raised his head once more and looked about at the eyes that were upon him. "I think you all understand," he said, appealingly. "We learned years ago at the University that faithful duty really counted, and not the dollars and the shouts alone—and having a name in encyclopædias. The kind of success we are looking for isn't always gilt-edged; the band isn't always playing for it to march by! When I looked up this man I found a good, clean, honest story—a story of devotion and loyalty, and the kind of courage that held out when nobody was looking on or waving hats! I think we all ought to be glad he is a 'Seventy-six'

man, and that we are not so narrow or ignorant as to count him a lost cause and a failure. I want you to drink a toast to him with me — gentlemen, to the man who does his job in a shadow!" Crane's voice had dropped to a whisper. The whole class came to its feet together!

Clews realized that this toast was to him. Had his head been cool he would have arisen with the rest, unmarked and unknown — it was the old custom of remaining seated when so honored that betrayed him. It left him a second behind the rest, and the speaker's big blue eyes were upon him at once, growing wider and wider in an opening bloom of recognition, and staring and staring like a man who sees into another world. Crane lowered his glass and some of the yellow liquid trickled down on the table-cloth. "Good God!" he exclaimed, and his suppressed voice penetrated to every corner of the room.

Clews stumbled back into his chair. Sitting there, with the others upon their feet, he became the central figure. For a single second there was complete silence, and then "Seventy-six" raised its voice in a great generous roar, increasing, billowing up, surging into Clews's ears. He looked up with wet cheeks and smiled like a pleased boy. This was his class, cheering — and for him!

Much later in the night, at an hour when only a few stray lights were burning in the dormitories, some under-

graduates who had stayed over for Commencement and were returning to their rooms after an evening in town, saw five men, old enough to be their fathers, quarrelling in the moonlight in the middle of the yard.

"It was this tree," said one. "I know it."

"I tell you you are wrong. We know what we are talking about," came two other voices.

"I've been out here every year," asserted a third. "It's absurd to suppose I've forgotten!"

The undergraduates, who had stopped at a doorway, grinned significantly. "Scandal in gray hairs," said one.

Still later in the night, Clews returned to his wife and daughter, who had been sitting up anxiously, watching the hands of the clock walk into the morning. Governor William Drowson was with him, wearing a Panama hat which was no longer a decorous covering for the head, and blinking good-naturedly at the light.

"Alice," said Carter Clews, "this is Billy. I roomed with him when I was a Freshman. He's going to spend the night with me."

THE QUITTERS

LIGHT and amusing narratives often follow some such title; this particular tale, as certain unnamable persons will recognize, being mostly true, is not altogether light. Perhaps whatever serious touch there is in it is due in large part to the fact that try as one may, it is impossible to remember the events from any other point of view than that of Zadie Wilkes, — pretty, spirited, sixteen year old, abnormally mature young lady.

She sat on the rail of the Casino at Burden's, looking up into the rotunda of the blossoming night sky, and then at the moonlight dancing on the salt water of the Ocean below the cliff, while a well-bred young gentleman, who in the winter attended a fashionable preparatory school, tried his best to ply a conversation. He probably felt if he could only awake her from the half dream in which she seemed to live when not in active motion, he could congratulate himself as a man of parts; he probably was sure that he had never seen quite so perfect a specimen of young person, with hair so black, or arms so well shaped, or hands so graceful, or eyes so deep, or social position and money in her own right so well secured.

"The air is very clear," said he, with his back to the music and the dancers within. "Look! Across Bartol's

Inlet there I can see every lighted window in your house. Over the water—with the tide rushing by the rocks, it looks like a steamer — a big steamer, doesn't it?"

"How did you know it was our house?" asked Zadie of her new acquaintance.

"Oh, everybody here at Burden's knows that," the young man said. Then he added quickly, "It is a wonderful piece of shore house architecture — up there on the rocks among the cedars. My! All this land is expensive. It's the result of the syndicate. They make a buyer build a forty-thousand-dollar house or better. I even think they'd be glad to see this hotel — smart as it is — burn down. Do you ever go canoeing on the tide river?"

"Yes."

"I've never met your mother," he said after a painful pause. "Is she here?"

"Oh, no," Zadie answered with a strange quirk in the corners of her flexible young mouth. "She almost never goes to dances with me. I came with Mrs. Trant — she's nice. She was in Palm Beach when we were there on the *Cyclamen* — our boat."

"Oh!"

Zadie seemed to relapse into her dreamy contemplation of the night, water, and stars, but her companion's silence, which was noticeable by contrast to the chatter of other young people who had come out from their waltzing, brought her suddenly to her duties.

"You asked me about canoeing," she said. "I don't go much. I like to ride better — if the horse is big and strong and ugly. Don't you like ugly horses? And I like to sail — it's a fifteen-foot skimming dish rig — with lots of wind. I think I prefer to sail alone. Anything really sporty is a great relief after a whole winter at school — though lots of the nicest girls there are terribly tame, even in summer."

"You must be like your brother. Every one has heard about how he drove the four-in-hand across the college campus after the Blenhasset races. I guess for a man who isn't on any of the teams he's the best-known fellow in his class."

Zadie raised her pretty head, straightening the curve in her full, almost muscular throat, and looked straight into the eyes of the much-dressed boy from Philadelphia, almost resentfully.

"He has done very well in his studies — that is, since his Freshman year," said she, in the manner of one defending a black sheep.

The young admirer nodded. "It doesn't pay to drink at college or run around. You ought to hear the headmaster at our school — Mr. Ellecott — talk about it."

He had unconsciously touched a tender subject; again Zadie scowled. In the glow of light from the ballroom he could see the slight wrinkling of her smooth forehead.

"Really this is the clearest air I ever noticed," he exclaimed quickly. "Just see the light of those motor car lamps on the trees over at your house."

The girl jumped as if he had told her that her house was on fire; she looked long and anxiously across the black gap of rock-dotted inlet.

"Please don't make a noise!" she said with a sudden tremor in her voice. "It's standing under our porte-cochère. There is something I want to know. Listen!"

"What are you listening for?" he whispered, rolling a cigarette softly on his finger tips.

"For the horn!" said Zadie without moving from her tense position of leaning over the rail. "If it's our limousine, I can tell it by the sound of the horn."

"I doubt ——" began the talkative youth, shifting his chin on his high collar.

"Listen!" she interrupted. A faint sound was borne to them on the breeze, just loud enough to be heard amid the rising music and the rustling of the dancers' feet. "It's ours," she said with parted lips. "It's ours! And it's leaving!"

Her companion opened his eyes in astonishment at her excitement. Not knowing what to say and seeing other youths approaching in an admiring phalanx, he stammered, "Really you must let me have another dance. It's already late. One more, surely, miss Zadie."

"Why, yes — or rather I do not know. I can't tell.

I don't feel very well. I must telephone. Can't one of you boys show me where the telephone is. Right away! Now!"

A whole team of white shirt fronts led her through the groups of older girls and matrons with their glittering, bare shoulders, soft-colored wraps, sheen of brown, golden, or white hair and exhalations of perfume.

It was a relief to her to shut the door of the booth and be alone. She bit her lips as she waited for an answer from her home. Her prayers that Annette — the Annette who had evolved from her governess of childhood to her personal maid in the damosel age — would answer the call, were not in vain.

"It's I — Zadie," she whispered into the instrument. "Is it you, Annette? Have you watched as I told you? And said nothing?"

"Yes, miss," came the voice. "Do not doubt. *Mais oui* — I have tried."

"What is the limousine waiting for?"

"Monsieur Wilkes — the last train."

"Oh Annette!"

"Madame and he have been talking — talking — talking — ever since dinner, miss. I could not hear."

"Tell all."

"Your father came out from the library — oh, an hour ago. His hair was so disarranged, miss Zadie. But your mother had not been crying, miss. I brought her some sherry. She was very calm. If you had not

overheard, miss, you would not have suspected. I never would have suspected myself."

"If you love me," Zadie breathed into the mouthpiece, "tell me everything. What did my father say?"

"He said he was glad, miss Zadie, that it was all settled at last. He was in the dining-room by the big sideboard, drinking a large glass. I heard him say, as if to himself, miss, that it was all arranged."

The girl's voice broke slightly as she said, "Is he gone already?"

"Yes, miss."

"Oh!"

"The train leaves in twenty minutes, miss. He has taken the road on the Neck."

Zadie dropped the receiver, threw open the door of the booth, snatched the silken scarf from her bare throat and faced the two young men, whoever they were, who still remained waiting for her favor.

"How long will it take for your motor car to reach the station?" she asked.

"Twenty-five minutes," said one of them with a stare of astonishment. "You see, Miss Wilkes, we would have to go by Markham's Bridge."

"The quickest way would be to take my motor boat and cut right across the inlet to the Neck Road," explained the other. "But I wouldn't know where to make a landing. It's all rocks and seaweed."

"What do you care?" cried Zadie with simulated gayety. "I want to win a wager. Come on!"

The young man glanced down at his evening clothes, and then met Zadie's entrancing smile.

"All right. I'm sure to knock a hole in her, but never mind. I'm game. Just as we are?"

"Just as we are!" said Zadie so desperately that both her companions looked up wonderingly. "And hurry!" said she, running down the steps of the Casino toward the float.

The moon had been hidden by clouds, the tide hissed viciously around the piles of the landing and the dangerous, boulder-dotted inlet was dark. Even those dancers who came out of the glare of the ballroom stopped to look when they heard the vibration of a motor-boat engine beating a froth across the rushing tide. Zadie, for a moment, could see their peering faces. Then she climbed forward over the dew-wet seats to the bow where she fixed her eyes on the irregular, tree-topped sky line of the Neck, and pressed her nails into the palms of her hands to keep from shivering in the cold salt wind which blew up from the sea.

The young man who stood beside her at the wheel, took off his coat to put it about her shoulders. "Oh, thank you," she said, and then called back to the other youth, the owner, who was at the engine, "It's awfully good of you to satisfy my whim this way and I do hope you will not go aground."

There was every chance of it. The waters were black, except where the phosphorescence glowed in swirls of the tide about the exposed rocks. Steering in such waters could not be intelligent. The youth in the bow was doing his best, but he in the stern, with his hand ready to reverse the engine at the first impact, was already estimating roughly the cost of repairs. No doubt he regretted the folly of the venture. He was silent.

"Please go faster!" exclaimed Zadie without turning her eyes from the shore before them.

The owner of the craft rose to his feet. He looked out toward the dark shadows of the rocks near the bank. "Really, Miss Wilkes, I don't believe we can go in near those boulders," he said. "You cannot land here."

She had just opened her lips to reply when the nose of the craft jammed itself between two hidden rocks. The shock threw them all forward, sprawling over the seats. One of the young men whispered an oath. The noise of the engine ceased. It was very quiet with only the sound of the tide brushing along the sides of the disabled launch and an occasional wisp of music borne on the wind from the distant Casino. The three stood up, looking about in the helpless manner of persons who have run aground.

Zadie was the first to move. She dropped the young man's coat from her shoulders.

"I'm awfully sorry," she said to her companions apologetically. "But it was necessary for me to reach

the Neck Road. Don't you boys bother with me. I'm a good swimmer."

"You're not going overboard!" cried one of them.

She smiled. "It is necessary," she said quickly, and stepping over the rail, she poised herself on the submerged rock, then slid out into the tide.

"Oh, Miss Wilkes! I say!" cried the youth at the engine.

Zadie was tearing at her skirt, kicking at it with her heels to free herself of its encumbering folds. She thought it best to treat the matter lightly, and as the white silken material floated away from her, she simulated a very happy, care-free laugh.

"Don't follow me," she commanded. "I'm all right." She was taking long, slow strokes throught the eddying water which, warmed by the afternoon sun up the river, was in comparison to the cold air, of gratifying comfort. The course of her bare arm through the tide shone with the white phosphorescence. She laughed again as she swam into a streak of it which skirted the last open water between her and the shore.

"Are you all right?" bellowed one of the young men, suddenly afflicted by a feeling that he too should have jumped overboard for gallantry, if for no other reason.

She shook her head out of the water and called again. "Of course, of course." She felt the slippery seaweed under her feet and was scrambling up over the rocks.

The cold wind upon her, added to the excitement of her race for the railroad station, made her hesitate a moment before pushing her way through the scraggly blueberry bushes. She felt miserable and exhausted. Then, as she went forward through the underbrush up the slope toward the road, she warmed with her desire for haste and forgot the scratches made upon the tender skin of her arms and throat as she threw herself between the dead lower branches of the scrub pines. She was talking to herself as she went, telling herself, half aloud, what she must do, how she must act, rehearsing it all as if for a play.

Against the dark green of the cedars that perched along the hill where the Templetons have built their summer place, the Neck Road appeared as white as a path of moonlight. Zadie stepped out onto it with a moment of doubt in her mind as to which direction of it led to the station. Then she saw a fallen pine log where during her daily rides, dismounting from her horse, she had often sat to enjoy the coolness of the shade, and there came to her the realization that she was only a half a mile from the railway, and that four miles of winding road ran out behind her to her house on the end of the point. She gathered the wet disorder of her hair about her neck, shook out the dripping underskirt which had so impeded her movements in the water, and with thankfulness for her healthy body and her well trained lungs, she started into a run.

So intent was her mind upon reaching the station before the train had taken her father that she heard a motor car behind her with no recognition that it might be the very one she sought to intercept. Indeed, her only thought was that in her condition of dress she must not be known, — that she must not allow her adventure to cause talk. So, turning from the road, already marked with the white fingers of light from the automobile lamps, she again pushed her way into the undergrowth of briers: it was at this moment that the sound of the horn she recognized so well, started the echoes down the avenue of evergreens.

With a little cry of joy she stepped out into the road and into the gleam, like a dancer coming into the circle of the spot light of a theatre. The chauffeur sounded a warning twice, so that the motor car, like a personality, seemed to be expressing its surprise at her appearance. It came to a stop not fifteen yards away from where she stood waiting and staring back into its great eyes with a little smile on her lips.

"Zadie!" called her father. "Great Scott, what has happened to you?"

"Nothing," she said, "I'm glad I am in time. I want to talk with you. I know I am not very presentable, but get out, please. John will drive on a few yards. This is rather amusing, isn't it?"

"Amusing!" said her father, impatiently. "I have

no time for this, Zadie. I'm going on the late train. Jump in and put on this coat."

The girl shook her head. "No," she asserted, "I must talk with you first." She shifted her position so that she stood directly in front of the machine. She even sighed as if contented with the situation. Her father's face as he leaned forward over the seat, seemed, in the white glow reflected from the trees, to have lost its red, well-fed, bovine appearance; the lines in it were heavier, the lips and eyes more humanly brutal. He uttered an exclamation of anger as he stepped out of the car and slammed the door behind him.

"Well," said Zadie in a voice apparently most cheerful, "I hear you are going to get a divorce."

"What!" exclaimed her father. "How did you know of it? Who told you?"

"It comes from being sophisticated," she explained. "And I didn't think it fair to settle everything without me. You have made me swim and run and scratch myself on briers just like a scared animal. And I've got lots to say about it."

"Say it, then," said he, fiercely. "I am just tired out with the business. And I've got to catch that train. If you were older ——"

"But I'm not," she replied, shaking her head sadly. "And if you don't come back home with me, I'm going to run away. I'm old enough to do that. You've always been talking about good sportsmanship — about

not fouling in polo or knockabout racing and about being game. But now you're running away without giving me fair play. You're trying to cheat on the score."

"It's your mother's fault," her father said, pacing back and forth. The train whistle sounded far off.

"Well," said Zadie, "do as you wish now. But you have cheated me. There's the train. You can just catch it now. But if you run away without giving me my chance to talk about this with you and my mother, I will say that you are — what is it you call it? — a quitter. I will cut you on the street!"

"Don't talk like that, Zadie," he said, flinching a little.

"Call John then," she said, restraining a desire to burst into tears. Then, as he bent down to look into her young face, she compressed her lips. Something in that expression frightened him.

"Turn around!" he called to the chauffeur. His voice and manner as he handed his daughter his overcoat, telling her to turn up the collar, was sullen; he gave brusque directions to return to the house and said no word more during the passing minutes that elapsed while the machine retraced the Neck Road to the Point. Zadie, too, huddled in the corner of the seat, was silent except once, when she heard behind her the whistle of the locomotive coming into Gray's Harbor. "Oh, there it is!" she said as if she still were running by herself along the road to reach the station in time. Her ex-

clamation was answered by a suppressed ejaculation of anger from her father. He was used to having his way.

He growled some other angry words as they swung into the curving driveway where the tires crunched the loose gravel. Zadie noticed that the house was dark. One light alone burned. It was in her mother's apartments, and yet the shadow which moved against the curtain did not awake in the daughter any deep thrill of sympathy. Her mother was, after all, a good deal of a stranger. Zadie, therefore, was wondering, not how much that stranger was suffering, but rather how much of a scene she would make when her daughter said to her what she was planning to say.

She followed her father up the steps through the front door, and after he had snapped the electric switch in the great hall, the two stood for a moment looking at each other as if each expected the other to make a suggestion. The wet, torn clothes, the bleeding scratches, the disordered hair of his daughter seemed to awe him.

"How did all this happen, Zadie?" he asked nervously.

"It's nothing," she answered. "I want you to go up after my mother. I want to talk to both of you. Ask her to put on a wrap. We are alone — it is quiet in the library. Tell her not to ask me about my being wet and all that. I have something to say to you."

Before her father could protest she had disappeared behind the curtains of the library. After a moment she

heard his step on the stairs, and, because of having made him obey her, a new confidence in her mastery caused her to straighten up and look about the room. Luxury, money, money, luxury — everywhere! It all seemed strange, as if she did not belong to it — as if it did not belong to her.

She looked up when her father returned, with a smile which on an older person's face would be described as satirical. "You must have astonished her," she said softly.

"Well, she is coming," said he. "She had not retired." He dropped into a chair and gazed back at her as if he were trying to understand the power by which the girl had won a victory over his will. Zadie, still clad in his overcoat, arose and without changing the wistful expression with which she looked upon him, stepped to the fireplace with its dead ashes, and thrust her cold hands into the pockets of the coat. She did not change her position, even when she heard the rustle of her mother's dress.

The curtains parted. A woman who had not yet outlived prettiness, nor had lost completely a certain sprightliness of motion, stood in the doorway, facing her daughter. She was still in the dress in which she had had dinner. Somewhere about her mouth there was a hardness; it was impossible to see any sign that she had shed tears. She appeared at the moment as a woman who had lived through enough emotions to have

developed a sort of antitoxin against the effects of all joys and sorrows. She touched the folds of her dress lightly, like a bird preening itself, and, taking her eyes from Zadie's, she inspected the glitter of rings upon her white, rather puffy, hand.

"I can't quite understand the necessity of further talk, Zadie, my dear," she said. "As I have just said to your father, it is quite improper that you should insist upon entering into the matter at all. I came down because —" She hesitated and then made a little upward motion of her tapering fingers.

"Have you nothing more to say, mother?" asked the girl.

"Why no — what more? Your father and I have known, I suppose, that we have grown apart. It may be quite sudden and shocking to you, my dear, but you may take my word for it that the only reason is that we are tired with the present arrangement. So there is nothing more to say."

The girl turned toward her father and he nodded solemnly, but with averted eyes. "That's all," said he after a minute.

"Sit down, mother, please," said Zadie. "I thought possibly it was coming to this. You did not say anything about it to me."

"My dear!" exclaimed Mrs. Wilkes. "How could I? You are only a very young girl."

Her daughter nodded. "Well, I suppose I am," she

said gravely. "But neither of you know much about me, anyhow."

Wilkes looked up with widened eyes; he moved forward as if he were about to speak.

"I think I make a rather poor daughter for you," the girl went on. "I evidently have different ideas. Perhaps I got them from the servants. Somehow I look upon this sort of planning for a divorce as a disgrace — as a kind of vulgar thing. When people are as rich as we are and so much in the public eye, it is written up in all the newspapers. Perhaps my picture would be printed. So it's partly my business, after all."

Her mother tapped with her heel on the rug. "Zadie!" she said. "That is impertinence."

"Don't try to be severe, mother," said the daughter. "I can leave you both if I want to. You can't talk down to me any more, because if I were married I wouldn't be cowardly about living up to what was, at least, respectable, And if I had a daughter, I would play fair with her and tell her what was going on, so that when she found out she wouldn't be frightened and pained and desperate and scared."

Her parents gazed at her with astonished eyes, but, perhaps because her voice had been so calm and her words so mechanical, neither one of them made reply.

Zadie sighed, brushed back wet strands of hair from her forehead and looked at the floor.

"I suppose that it is natural for these separations to

happen," she said. "Father has nothing to do but look at horses and clothes and wonder where he'll go next. You, mother, have a boy in college. He drinks too much, but you rather feel he'll come out all right somehow. Besides, I do not bother you much. You even have a social secretary and a maid. So there's nothing much for you to do. I've grown up just like you — both of you. I have everything I want. I suppose that when there is nothing to think about but bridge, that a divorce makes a nice change."

"Zadie!" cried Mrs. Wilkes.

"Well, the girl's right," said the man with a whispered oath.

"Oh, yes, I'm right," said she, sweetly. "We're all rather poor sports. We have so many homes that we haven't any, and we eat rich things that sooner or later make all of us fat, and we hate ourselves. And then we get divorces. It's a great disadvantage to me. I want to be able to have some pride in my people. I rather wish that I was the daughter of our gardener!"

Her father rose from his seat, picked up a book, examined its title and dropped it. It glanced on the edge of the table, then fell with a slap on the polished floor.

"I do mean it," said Zadie, after a silence when there was only the voice of the sea breeze outside. "Have you ever noticed how wholesome they are? They have a girl at a convent somewhere. Mrs. Cronan has shown me the letters her daughter writes to her. And

then I don't believe there'll be any divorces in the family. Really they're very decent and respectable. I don't know what the effect will be on them. I mean, when they hear you've become nicely and quietly divorced. There won't be any trouble. It's so easy. Certainly, if I were married, I should think about the effect on other people. Maybe it would make somebody restless and unhappy and put wrong ideas in their heads. It only disgusts me!"

Mrs. Wilkes leaned forward, shaking with pent-up emotion. She stared at her daughter, who was now resting with one arm on the mantelpiece in an easy posture of one who utters commonplaces.

"You should not talk to your own mother in this way," she almost whimpered. "How can you do it!"

"You are play-acting, mama," Zadie answered coldly. "Don't do that. I know that I have been brought up fashionably and conveniently. Neither of you have put yourselves out for me."

"You have had anything you wanted," growled Wilkes, closing his powerful fists.

"Except attention from you." There was no tone of anger or emotion in her words. "I have had a nice expensive nurse, so that mother wouldn't lose her figure, and a nice governess and separate apartments to myself, so I wouldn't see the follies and little gayeties that went on at your dinner-parties, father. I ate alone with a French peasant, so that I wouldn't be a nuisance even

when you and mother sat down to eat together. I've had ponies and boats and grooms to ride with me. Really, I have had several mothers. They were the French maids. I've had several fathers. They were the grooms and gardeners. And I've been a good daughter to them. Most of them thought I had too much spirit, but they were fond of me. I think I loved them all. You paid for them. You gave them good wages. They were nice. They brought me up."

She stopped, out of breath. And, as she stopped, Wilkes moved his tall, ponderous body behind the chair in which his wife had settled, as if forced back by the words of her daughter. It almost seemed as if the man had gone to the woman to withstand an onslaught that they must brave in common.

"You see that I talk like a stranger — and probably very young," Zadie went on. Her lips quivered as she forced the words. "And very much alone! Quite by myself. But if our money and big houses and society mean anything at all, you don't quit — either of you. You don't love each other, perhaps. I guess none of us love each other much. That sounds harsh and cold, doesn't it?"

"Harsh — yes!" said her father, shutting his hands.

"Well, it comes from the way we live, I think," said the girl. "We have had so much that everything has become sort of formal and cold, anyhow. But I think we ought to be respectable. I couldn't go back

to school, if there was a divorce. Some girls could. But I may be queer. I feel older than most of them. Anyhow, I couldn't go back. And then suppose after a while that I fell in love with somebody. What would he think of our family? Why, it isn't a family at all — it never was a family — just a house with four selfish people employing a lot of servants and keeping farther and farther apart."

Her mother gave forth a shrill little cry, as if she were going to faint but, instead, she sat up straight in her chair, and turning about said to Wilkes, "Leave us, John. I want to talk with Zadie alone."

"Oh, no," exclaimed the daughter quickly. She moved away from the fireplace. The color had gone from her face; her self-possessed manner had slipped like a cloak from her figure.

"What are you going to do?" said Wilkes, in a frightened tone.

Zadie threw up her round chin and stamped her foot. "What can I do?" she asked fiercely. "What can a girl my age do? That's the mean part of it. I can't do anything!" She was furious with a sudden feeling of helplessness. "Both of you are against me! You've brought me up like a blooded horse — only it cost more and I had apartments instead of a box stall. It cost more money, that's all. It wasn't my fault. I may have wanted a little love, that's all. I'm not asking for that. But I don't want the divorce. It would be

awful. You are quitters! You are —" She stopped suddenly. "I'm sorry," she whispered. "I forgot." She seemed exhausted and her voice, like her figure, suddenly relaxed. She looked from one to the other of the two frightened faces that stared back at hers, that was so abnormally old and white.

"I can't help it. I'm so tired. Please don't go away from each other. Please don't spoil everything. I'm so tired! I must tell you. I *do* love you both."

This time it was Mrs. Wilkes who exclaimed. "Oh, God!" she cried. It was not an oath.

"I must go to bed." The daughter's voice had become a whisper. "I'm lonesome!" She was again a little girl. She caught at the edges of the curtains with her hands. A few drops of water from the bottom of her sleeve sparkled as they struck the shiny floor. Her figure seemed inches shorter. Her lower lip drooped and trembled.

"Zadie!" cried Wilkes. "Little girl!"

For a moment her poise returned to her. She even tried to smile. "I mustn't stay any longer," she said. "You will excuse me, I am sure. I must go, really. I believe if I stayed any longer I would cry."

The curtains, dropping heavily, closed behind her. She heard the sound of sharp, angered words in the library as, shivering, she crawled up the stairs.

Without turning up the light in her room, she undressed, crept to the window a moment and looked out.

The house was still, the outside world was still. The sky was black; the wind had fallen. She could hear no sound but the pulsing chorus of night insects and the swash of the little waves below the rocks.

After she had climbed into her bed she wet the pillow with quiet, unrestrained tears.

Perhaps nearly three hours had passed before she heard a step on the stairs. Her door opened slowly, and because of the glow of light behind, she could see that it was her mother, still dressed, still carrying her head high.

But then there was that rush to her bedside, that falling on the knees, that burying of the frivolous head in the curve of Zadie's body, that clutching of distracted hands.

"Oh, little daughter, little daughter," cried the mother. "If you and God will only forgive me! I love you, love you, love you."

Zadie thrust her fingers into the soft mass of hair and sighed. One would have said that it was a sigh of happiness.

"Perhaps it's all right now," said Zadie. "Father says it will be all right."

"Your father!"

"Yes. You didn't know. It's dark. He's kneeling on the other side of the bed here."

SHARK

Down at the end of the United States, in the last of the Florida Keys, the moonlight shone on the sleeping town of wood, on the rippling, tropical sea streaked with the white of mullet schools that fed on the bottom, and on the piles of dried sponges that covered the end of the wharf like miniature mountains. The watchman of the firm of Gerry & Townsend swung his old legs above the water that lapped at the piles. He did not drop his h's as he talked, like the natives. He was from Maine and had found a strange harbor for the end of his seafaring. Now and then he would gaze off toward the shadows in the northern sky, nursing softly the fire in his pipe; then one could hear the turtles — the big, green, soft-eyed turtles — blow in their prison pen under the slaughter platform above.

The tide was up; again all the flotsam swirled in the water between the wharves, and the disorderly, decrepit charcoal sloop, tied to the end of the pier, rode high. We could see a light from a stove in her pit reflected dimly red against the patched and dirty sail.

Suddenly there arose out of her, and above the end of the wharf, a huge figure. Outlined in the moonlight, it was plainly a giant negro, stripped, and at the end of

his long and knotted arm, upstretched, the thick fingers moved to the tune of a gibbering croon.

"That's him," said the watchman, spitting carelessly. "That's Hutten." He narrowed his eyelids, pretending the moonlight was too strong for him. "That's him."

"I wish 'e was in 'ell," growled the lean rum smuggler, a real "Conch," who had been on a spree in Havana and had lost his keel-shoe in a Gulf norther, for which reason he was ugly. "Both 'e an' 'is 'istory," he added. "Hi met 'im one night this winter off Boca Chica. Hi was off fer kingfish. Hi 'ates sailin' alone at night, an' 'e yells to me h'cross the water. 'E ain't 'olesome!"

"Don't I know it well enough?" the watchman protested. "Why, I know his autobiography just as good as you and a lot better. The Greek spongers cross themselves when they see him coming through the passes.

"I know sensible men who say it's wrong to sail alone at night down here," he went on, turning to the third and silent member of their trio. "You don't know these waters. Look at that mangrove key off east there! It ain't settin' in the water, now, is it? It's ridin' on the air, ain't it? You can do what you please, but I don't sail alone through the Keys at night. I've seen queer things in a fog on the Grand Banks, but it ain't nothing to these waters."

The cool wind from the shadowed sky of the north whistled once, and rattled the rigging of the negro's

charcoal sloop. Then it dropped, and the waters around the wharves were black again. The blue and green fires that burned in them had gone with the north breeze, and there was no sound to drown the faraway screams of young pelicans in the mangrove tangle, and the mists smelled salt and sweet. The naked giant negro had gone back into his pit.

"Don't you suppose, once, he was like any little nigger?" said the watchman, pulling at his hawk nose. "They're pretty — black velvet, eh? A Florida nigger he is. I've got so I know 'em well. He hadn't a name — just Jim. Nothing much to eat but the everlasting mixtury of hominy and yellowtails, and yet he grewed — look at the size of him! Look at his arms, as big as my legs! And a neck like a windlass! Along back here some years he was working on the docks at Miami, and a-buckin' on the warehouse floor after the noon whistle blowed, and singing and grinning like a mainland nigger. I've learned something of niggers, brother. No island niggers can point up to happiness like 'em. There's more joy in a minute in a Florida nigger than all there is in Nassau or the Barbados! There's too much philosophizing in an island nigger. But Jim was the kind as was happy and didn't care why."

One of the turtles thrashed against the side of the pen, and the rum smuggler absent-mindedly pointed with his thick thumb toward the shadow of the town.

"They say he went up to work in them phosphate

camps," the watchman went on, as if the interruption disturbed him, "but there ain't any happiness there. There was a foreman who beat him. Yep! He beat him four times with a blacksnake, and the nigger didn't sing then. He beat him again, and he stopped dancing, and tried to run away, he did. And so he beat him again, and then he didn't grin any more. But he grewed — working with a sledge hammer. It put them hunks of meat below his arms and that upholstery of muscles below his chest.

"Well, he come back to the East Coast a silent nigger, and he did what weren't good for no man, black or white, eh, John? 'Cause he bought that charcoal sloop to carry loads from Miami to Key West, and went sailin' of 'er alone. First you loads and sails down the three days and then you sails back. And the moonlight and fog — ain't pretty. In a calm them flat keys move, I tell yer — they float out of the water and wake them white cranes; and when a norther is coming, the water on them bars is burning with fire, and where the tangly bushes hangs out over the greasy mud, things drop off and splash. Sure as I sit here!

"There's no good in being too lonesome. I followed the sea thirty-nine years, and I know, and there's strange things in these particular waters that ain't good for a black man to know. This one, he learned 'em quick!

"Yessiree, he learned how to feed amberjack out of

his own hand and tease 'em up where he could hook 'em with a gaff. I heard a Bermuda nigger say that Jim Hutten would cook a piece of devilfish on that little stove of his and eat it. By an' by he got to makin' friends with sharks. They'd wait for a sight of that sloop coming down through the Flamingo Pass between Dolphin and Cocoanut Key.

"You know that big white bar to the left of the channel, John? They'd wait for him there, ten or twenty of 'em sometimes. I've seen them with their fins out of water — hammerheads and nurse sharks and dotties — a-waiting for him.

"He called 'em his pets an' brought 'em rotten meat. Took it down from the East Coast to 'em — to throw to 'em when they met him on the bar there. That ain't nice. You know it ain't.

"Moonlight or daytime they'd be there — the beasts — turning circles in the water — swish-swish — awaiting for that crazy sloop with her flapping sail and Jim stretched out, a-steering with one of them big brown feet of his.

"Confound him, he had 'em named! The water is clear as Holland gin, leeward of Dolphin Key, and where the palmettos an' cocoanut trees rattles and rustles, and throws shadows, you can see the bottom like it was the palm of your hand and you was looking into it — coral and basket sponges and buttonwood bushes. It was there they'd play around his boat, and he would call

'em by name. I tell you, it's a fact that when he had fed 'em he'd strip off his clothes and swim with 'em, and his body, blacker than the rest of 'em, would go a-cutting of the water. He can swim! Hell! he *can* swim!"

The rum smuggler put out his thumb, as stout as a child's wrist, and stabbed the air with its blunt tip. "An' there'd be cub sharks eighteen feet long — man-eaters, we call 'em," he added.

The Yankee frowned, much displeased. "I heard the history from the black man's own mouth," he grumbled. "He kissed the black stone he wears on his neck before he told me. But what you say is true, for *that* I seen with my own naked eyes — big cubs is *correct*.

"It weren't to last, though — you know what I mean, John? No, it weren't," he continued. "For one day Jim sailed up to Flamingo Bar, and there weren't none of the herd there. It was in the middle of the day, and hot as a griddle-cake. Jim's sloop was coming through with the tide, and the sail was flapping as loose and flimsy as smoke, and the water was as green as one of these new banana leaves, and oily and smooth. Jim, he sits up and looks around, and there weren't no fins cutting of the water. And he stands up and looks, and all the pass was as clear as the bottom of a Portland washtub. And there he stood with his shirt open and a long strip of goat meat in his big black hand.

"And while he looked he seen the water boil in the channel ahead of him, and the new beast rolled up, white and spotted and stout as a dory, a-riding with her bottom up. Some say she was a leopard shark, and some say as how she was a tiger. That ain't here nor there. When Jim seen her fin, he knew how big she was!

"She had to have the bar for herself, and she smelled Jim's meat and near went crazy. She rolled herself half out of the channel and beats her tail till it echoed from Cocoanut Key. Oh, she was a beauty!

"And when she turned in the water half a dozen yards from Jim's boat, he could see she had a perfect set of teeth — in all three rows — shining in the sunlight. He says that she was pretty — the prettiest one that ever swim!

"But she was hungry and tired, and when she thrashed about she spit up them red berries that float in the water off the Azores. She'd had a long ocean trip, and she was hungry! So Jim throwed her the meat, and she came up and turned and snapped it in. And when her jaws come together it sounded like the ratchets on a tramp's derrick! That's the kind of beauty she was.

"Ben Grogan said she was a beauty, too. He was tacking up by Dolphin Key with a load of salt fish for the East Coast. And in the channel, when he sighted the nigger's crazy sloop, he seen she was sliding through the pass there with the tide, and he seen the big nigger

stretched out on the stern, with his face looking down into the water, and a big black fin turning to left and right, gentle and easy, in the water behind, as the crittur sunned herself and looked up at her man friend. Grogan was a long piece away from 'em, but he seen it. He knew what was going on. And he cursed Jim Hutten to his mate, and the mate cursed the sun for being so hot and the empty sky for drawing their wind away.

"But after that there weren't never a time when she didn't meet Jim in that pass there. She learned like the rest of 'em — them she'd druv away from his friendship — what days to wait for him; and if a head wind had kept him back she'd get as fidgety as a woman, and come off the bar and go up and down the tide in the pass, raising her head out of the water to look down among them dozens of dottie keys and mangrove clumps — looking for him. And you needn't tell me, John, that it was the red lump of bad beef he brought her that kept that big beast on Flamingo Bar. What does a shark her size want of a little mouthful like that? Don't she want to be off again for a long swim — to Newfounderland fer a touch of cold water, or a change of diet, where she kin get codfish, eh?

"But Jim wouldn't trust her at first. He thought she was fond of him, but he wouldn't go overboard no more on the bar. He wouldn't swim when her fin showed near. Oh, she was a big one and a beauty, and he could lay out in the stern, lazy; and where the sun had burnt

his back underneath his shirt, he was half sole leather. So, astern of the sloop there, the shark would slide in the water, which was just as clear as the air, every mite! And Jim would look down at her and see her eyes, round and still, a-looking back at him, and he liked the soft noise of her fin and he talked to her as if she'd been a common human being. He liked her for being so white — as white as a new sail, and marked with black on her long sides. And he liked her oily smell!

"He wouldn't never have trusted her except for a accident. And *that* was a hurricane that blew two days and stirred up the water in them keys. It was so full of sand no shark could open an eye there. It druv her out into the deep water of the stream, and she was late getting back. Jim come up to Flamingo Bar two days late himself, and he looked for her and she weren't there. The breeze still held out and was fair for his course up the coast. He looked and he looked. The water in the channel was all in a stew, but she weren't there. And he squatted down in the cockpit and put his face in his big black hands. She weren't there. And he looked some more, but her fin didn't show. She was gone! It was along in the late afternoon, and he went fifteen miles up beyond the pass and *there* he turned back. She weren't there, and he just had to go back. He couldn't believe it. He had to go back — beating his way back to the bar. He couldn't believe as how he would never see her again!

"It come on night, and the wind dropped so's it was so still amongst them keys you could hear a fish jump half a mile away, and the sky was red at the edge where the hurricane had gone. The nigger dropped his anchor just over one of them pot holes on the bar, and he set up on the empty charcoal bags, looking and looking and hoping to see her. And he couldn't eat no supper, and he looked till the big white part of his eyes was pink, and till it was most dark and the pelicans was screamin' home.

"He sat there with his chin on his knees, and he feared as how maybe she was dead, and while there was a little light left he pulled off his clothes and stood up, stripped and black, just as you seen him awhile ago, and he dived into the water that had cleared with the calm and new tide. Oh, he could swim and turn! And he lay in the cool water with his face down, looking at the shadows of the basket sponges and the gar-fish that darted across the patches of white mud. How he could hear them fish jumping in the channel, eh?

"So the first he knows he smelled her oily smell and felt her skin, like sandpaper, scratch his leg. And he seen her pass under him with her long, white body and her big, pointed tail, turning soft to skupp her for'ard. And she turned again, and the water whirled like a undertow and took him with it.

"But he could see how glad she was. She was nosing him gentle as a kitten, and he knew then how she felt

toward him. He seen her eyes a-looking at him, and he took his time swimming back to the boat. He climbed aboard the sloop and chucked the beef to her and talked to her, and that night he sailed north by moonlight, watching her big black fin swishing around the boat, and he was singing like you heard him sing just now. He says she never left him till day come.

"Not once did she miss him a single trip after that, and he weren't afraid of her any more. He'd lay up on Flamingo for the night, and she'd lay in the shallows waiting for him to call her again in the morning, and she'd come up and measure her length against the sloop, but she weren't never rough.

"No sir! Sometimes she'd swim a half mile in the sunlight for play, and come back around the stern of the sloop, to work out her speed. And then Jim would shout to her as she'd go. And she'd turn on her side and pick up a bunch of floating weed and toss it in the air.

"Then come the first trip down from Miami when Jim carried somebody else. I remember he tied right there where you see his boat now. We was sorting sponges and heard him talking and having a row with some one. Of course it was a woman. I don't know where he'd got her. Nobody keeps track of these niggers. But she was a little thing — thin, and shades lighter in skin than him, and she had a cough. I guess she wouldn't weigh over a hundred pounds, anyway, and the cough

had brought her down some more. She looked to me as if she was made out of pale, brown paraffine. He could have stood her on his hand and hardly noticed she was there!

"He was fond of her, too. He took her on every trip, and when they'd stop at the bar for the night the beast would come around the boat with her fin cutting the water. Jim's new woman was afraid of her, so afraid she would sit down and cry, quiet and scared, and bury her copper face in the charcoal bags. The beast was so big! It took her a long time to get accustomed to the idea of meeting her every time in Flamingo Channel and seeing her come up near the top of the clear water to put her two round eyes on big, black Jim.

"Sometimes it was Jim's woman that the shark was watching, too. Maybe the beast understood. Because by and by, she wouldn't eat no meat that the big nigger throwed her. She might have thought it was poisoned. And she didn't play no more. She'd lie on the surface in the moonlight and sulk and think, or slide off into the shallows below the palms on Dolphin Key by herself. I hates the beast, but maybe she knew, eh? Maybe her heart was breaking.

"The little nigger woman that shipped with Jim and coughed and sat with him the day long under the old dirty canvas he'd spread for her, got so she'd laugh at the beast who wouldn't eat the meat. I sometimes think she was foolish to laugh.

"Anyhow, she herself got so's she didn't want to spend nights at anchor on Flamingo Bar, so Jim gave in and they'd sail up warm evenings to Barracouta Key and cook supper on the sand beach there, where that wreck came ashore last winter. They say there ain't any rattlesnakes or mosquitoes on that key, and there, on the east point of it, they could get plenty of cocoanut milk to drink. And later in the evening they'd pull off their clothes and go into the water, where the beach drops quick down into the channel, and they'd run in the moonlight and laugh.

"It was one of them nights when there weren't no moon, but plenty of fire in the water and the sky. And Jim sat on the beach and watched the woman kicking and playing in the shallows. After a bit she called to him to come in, and she threw herself out toward the deeper water and begun to swim and splash around.

"Jim called fer her to come back. He said the tide was too strong. But she laughed at him and rolled over. And he laughed, too, and looked up into the sky all peppered with stars, and when we looked again he couldn't see her nowhere. So he called, but she don't answer, and he jumps up and pushes their little tender out and jumps into it and calls again, but she don't answer. All around, where she'd been, the water is afire with phosphorus, and a whole school of little fish is frightened and jumping.

"And Jim, he stands up on the slippery seat of the

tender that was all wet with the dew, and looks and calls again. But it's all quiet now, and the blue fire in the water had gone, and the little fish don't jump, and there ain't any noise but the rustle of them palms behind him.

"Then he sees a dark spot in the water, and he shoves his boat out to it and looks down at it. Looks like somebody had poured a bottle of ink into the water! And he reaches under the stern seat and gets a match, and he scoops up a handful of water out of the dark spot, and he lights his match and looks at what he's got in his hand. Then he knew. And just then a whiff of breeze came to him, and he could smell the oily smell. He knew who'd been there.

"Well, of course nobody cared the next time Jim come down *alone*, with a load of charcoal. It didn't make any difference what had become of his woman. She was scarcely big enough to notice, anyhow, and maybe he'd left her on the East Coast, or maybe her cough had taken her. Just niggers!

"Jim, he didn't say nothing. He lay on the wharf in the hot sun without noticing anybody. And sometimes he'd pick up the little black stone as hung by a chain to his neck. He'd talk to it. And finally, when he got his charcoal all unloaded, he went up into the town yonder, and he went in and bought himself a heavy butcher's knife and a oilstone.

"He come back toward night and sat down on the edge of the wharf, there, above them turtles, with his

big, black feet a-hanging over. And he sharpened his knife and sang and sharpened her some more, always singing — soft — like you heard him sing.

"Ben Grogan met him in Hawk Channel, sitting on the charcoal bags, singing and sharpening the knife. And after three or four of his trips to the East Coast and back, he had a razor edge on the blade, and in less than a month he had wore the knife all down so it weren't as thick or wide as a fish-hook. So he threw it overboard and went up and bought another and began to sharpen it, like the first — exactly!

"He was meeting his friend on every trip. I forgot to say so. She would always be waiting for him, sun or moon, at Flamingo Bar, and he would feed her and go overboard with her, just the same as ever. And as for her, she would turn and snap the meat in, and rush up and down the Pass for play, and she would follow his crazy sloop along when the water was smooth and green and clear, and he would talk to her. Once she come up beside the boat and he saw a bloodsucker stuck to her pretty white side, and he scraped it off for her. She was happy, happy as a mullet in the mud, and she didn't sulk no more. She come when he called her, and she'd follow him into water so shallow she'd scrape her belly on the coral. But he didn't show her his knife.

"He had to wait, perhaps. I couldn't say just why. Perhaps he *liked* to wait. But one day Ben Grogan tied up over at the fish wharf, and, when I come there, he

was telling the boys what he'd seen coming down between Dolphin and Cocoanut Key.

"He said he'd seen the biggest tiger shark he ever set his two eyes on. She was thrashing around in the sunlight. He seen her for an hour or more, and when he got close to her he could see wherever she'd go she'd leave a red streak in her wake — blood from two big gashes in her side. She was rolling bad and beating the water till bottom mud come up. She was rolling and fighting with death. And the last he seen of her she was astern of him. And she darted for'ard, and her body — big as a fish boat's hull — come out of the water clear. He could hear the choking of her, and she fell back and turned with her belly upwards! Then the tide begun to take her.

"And Grogan says he noticed as how Jim Hutten's boat was anchored on the bar and Jim was sitting naked on her stern, with something in his hand that was shinin' in the sunlight.

"As I say, it ain't often that the big nigger sings like he did to-night. He's a lonesome nigger. He's a silent nigger. He knows too much about these waters. But he don't take the inside course any more — never goes to Flamingo any more. When he told me the history, he kissed his little black stone as hangs on his neck. And he told me she didn't give him no fight. To be sure, he had her in shallow water, but she could have killed him, like as not. But she didn't do it? She didn't

TRY." He grunted and scraped out the pipe ashes with a rusty knife.

"That's what makes me sick. She just let him cut her open."

"The nawsty beast!" growled the rum smuggler. "What in 'ell did she do that for?" And he scratched his red hair with his thick fingers. The harbor was very still, there was little noise beside the rattle of blocks on the masts of boats anchored out in the slow heave. Beneath the wharf a big turtle blew again, and, with the mist that rose from the black waters about the piles, there came an oily smell — the mysterious odor of the calm tropical seas.

FIGHT

THE darkness produced a horrible effect upon Frances; it was void and pulsing. So as she came out of the room, where the quiet light was burning, shutting the door with infinite caution, she groped for the matches and found relief as the candle flame arose into its sharp-pointed bloom. The light showed the pallor of the girl's face under its mask of wholesome summer tan. Beneath the parting of her hair were eyes vainly pleading for lost sleep and lips that had been repeating a mechanical prayer over and over again these twenty-four hours. One sound alone invaded the ni ht stillness of the chamber in which she had entered, this familiar, unfamiliar; real and unreal room, which had been her dressing room during their first season at the Harbor. The room was now the nursery. The sound was slight but powerful in the peace of its monotony. It was the breathing of her first-born. She stepped softly across the carpet to the crib, holding the candle so that she might look long and well upon her little son. And then as the ever-increasing power of her agony bent her, she gave a cry like a tree cracking before a rising wind, and she went to her knees, burying her face in the comfort of the warm, fat little body.

"What shall we do now?" she cried softly. "What shall we do? And good God, what shall we do *then?*"

The baby awoke cheerfully, not being the sort of baby which looks like a grub and hates the world. He had been born into a link of such unspeakable love that he could only be this sort of a laughing, scrambling thing, content in his wisdom. "Hoo-gug-gug," said the baby, and the feeble caress of his hand wandered knowingly over his mother's face. Courage flowed out at the end of each nonsensical finger-tip.

"Hi-boy," she whispered brokenly, using the name that Edward had invented for informal occasions. "Do you understand it all, little Hi-boy? You know there is going to be no 'then,' little Hi-boy, don't you? You know he isn't going to die! He can't, little Hi-boy!"

The baby spoke once more, cheerfully, and in his own language. He seemed to be sleepy; for a long time she knelt there with aching knees and the terror of possibilities gripping her heart like a powerful astringent. Then at last came the measured tread of the yearling's breath. She got up and went to the window.

The first whiff of light had blown up above the horizon; the night was now gray and not black. Below the cottage and the sand cliffs the beach was receiving the swash of a calm yesterday, and the tide, streaked with the delay of outer sand-bars and squall-bitten, was hurrying in across the inlet before a sunshiny to-morrow. Far out a single sail crept in its groove along the north-

ward tack. That was the boat from the Point that had landed the specialist from the city. That was the water and those the morning mists that had chilled the body more dear to her than all other things, and had driven into it during the cold hours on a becalmed craft the disease that had made the body gasping, delirious, and helpless. Womanlike she lashed herself with her own torments that she had not made him carry a sweater.

The ghastly dream-painted days that had just gone were remembered in a hopeless chaos of events, — a country doctor's face, fearful in its own expression of kindly helplessness, the stoic, raw-boned nurse moving about in silent tread, the errands, the telegrams. Edward's smiles, his delirium, his fading voice, the torture of advances, retreats, marches, countermarches, of the pneumonia, all beset Frances in miserable alternation with the torment of the future. Then came this man of skill from the city. She had looked at his hands as she had welcomed him an hour before and noticed that they were powerful hands with heavy fingers and heavy veins across the back, suggestive of physical strength, just as the calm blue of his eyes and the purpose of his mouth were comforting in their show of mental power. "Let me see him," he had said. It sounded like the command of a great warrior going into the fight.

Frances crept back to the door between the two rooms, pressing her ear and hot cheek against the cool surface. She could hear the soft movement of the voice-

less nurse and then the tense, savage whispers of the doctor: "It's the delirium again. Heart's weaker. Strychnine. That's good. Give it to me. Heart's weaker. That's bad. If I'd only had a few hours more — no oxygen yet, no oxygen yet. Why don't it come? Give us that hyperdermic!" The words gradually relapsed into a necklace of fierce, whispered oaths around which went his tongue, touching at each one with vicious emphasis, and after a moment, there arose the orders again: "Look! look! Quiet now. He's coming into sense. What does that mean, eh? Quiet now. We've gained. Driving it back, eh?" There was exultation in his voice. Frances straightened, her arms pressed tight down at her sides. She had heard of surgeons who ate their souls over the operating table; this was the same thing. The rasp of the doctor's voice beyond the door told the story. For him at this moment there was the battle and nothing more in the universe.

"Listen! There's a falling off! Keep his carcass going till the oxgyen comes. Pretty stiff. It's up or down. Watch now! A matter of minutes. Ah, three o'clock. That's when they grow cold. Strychnine in the whiskey! See the air — fog's flown off. That's great. Where's that rally? There's got to be that rally. The last ditch. Neck and neck, you devils. The bugs, the bugs, eh!" He was talking into his own ears, but Frances behind the door beat her forehead with her knuckles. There was a hush in the next room,

and she heard the sick man call her name hoarsely; she sped back to the window that looked out upon the dim white trail of the road that led to the village. It was empty — a speckless white tape through the beach-grass and sweet-fern.

"The tanks — the oxygen!" she cried. "Why can't it come? Why can't they bring it?" The picture of some baggageman rolling one of the blue steel tanks leisurely across a platform at some junction came to her. She could see him set it down with a careless sigh of relief. Not a thought would he have that in that tank was a life and her happiness! He would look at the tag with a sauntering eye and kick a ringing vibration out of it and light his pipe contentedly.

The nurse, mistaking the door for the closet, opened it a crack before she knew her mistake. The doctor's words came in like individual fiends: "It's now or never. Fight, fight, fight, eh? But it's now — in these minutes. Take that! Take that! The extremity! He's unconscious. Rally! Come on! come on! If he don't — he's gone. I'll lose him, eh? Here, nurse, take this syringe — we're at the finish."

Frances sickened. Her lips were white. She blew out the candle, making her way to the window through the gray, sparse light of the promised dawn. A tern rose from its fishing on the shallows and, wheeling, flew to the wind-break of the sand-dunes.

She remembered the portents that the Romans inferred from the flight of birds. Was it to the right or to the left which boded evil? Her baby stirred as if he felt the influence of the augury and moved uneasily, hearing the drums of the new day, already upon the march. Frances quietly left the room and went into the hall. It was the only other place where she could be near at hand should the one eternal, indispensable moment come.

The breeze from the sea swept in from the open door below, bringing the sound of the monotonous tread of her husband's older brother up and down the porch. Two other women sat nerve-taut and ear-strained somewhere beneath; but even they could not understand; Edward's sister loved him, but Edward was not to his sister the all of living. She stood there, her muscles strained in a pathetic attempt to bring the tears to her dry eyes, until the door of the awful chamber opened, exposing the hushed yellow light and the doctor dragging his feet heavily out of the room.

In the darkness that followed the closing she heard the doctor's breath and did not dare to speak.

"I lose," said he, softly, with a startling break in his voice. There was no sorrow in it; it was merely the despair of a beaten man. He struck a match for his cigarette, and the light showed the drawn lines of his face and the beads of perspiration standing upon the breadth of his forehead. "I lose," said he.

The words thrust Frances back against the banisters, clutching at the thickness of the dark. At the noise he looked up quickly and, recovering himself, leaned forward. "Stop!" he exclaimed, with purposeful harshness. "He is not dead."

"You lose, you lose, you lose," she choked.

He gently took the candle from her hand and lit it, and examined her face to know how much he might tell her.

"You lose, you lose, you lose!" cried she.

"Listen," he answered firmly; "I wanted to get him out of danger during the time before we get the oxygen. I lost. He is still in danger — much danger. I think he may live."

"You lie!" They were new words to her lips.

Once more he raised the candle, studying her face, noting the lines beneath her brown eyes, her pallor, the rise and fall of her breathing. Finally he spoke to her softly: —

"You are a brave woman—a strong girl. Your body will stand much and your mind — that will stand more than your body. I have done what I could — the nurse will do what she can. But it's a thin thread and—" She lifted her head courageously high, as he paused. The pause was like the pause when an executioner's axe hangs back — "and your husband has stopped fighting against it. He won't even take food. That's always the way. He may not live."

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"Stopped fighting?" she cried. "And what are the chances if he lives till we get oxygen?"

"If he should happen to live until then—good, good."

"Stopped fighting against it," she repeated. "Watch me. I will *make* him fight."

The doctor's blue eyes narrowed for an instant; his thin lips moved. "Send the nurse out when you go in," he then said, briskly. He was a good actor. "I have some directions for her."

"My hair," said she, catching her breath. "Just see, and this gown. I must look well—I must look well when I go to him."

"The minutes" — he began.

"Yes, yes, the minutes," she answered, and slipped away.

Presently she went back. The doctor had once seen a shot-torn seagull trying to clean the blood from its white breast. There was a comparison.

"The delirium is intermittent," he said. "You understand that. Watch for the heart. I can hear you if you call."

The big raw-boned nurse, with colorless eyes gazing through spectacles, stood up and faced her as she entered.

"Oh, I thought you were the doctor," she whispered.

"He wants to see you out there," returned Frances; "I will stay until —"

"He's better," finished the nurse, softly, nodding at

the bed. She was a big-framed woman, but a woman. "Your husband is quiet now. He has been delirious. Soon he will open his eyes and he will know you — that will be your chance."

"Yes, yes, my chance," answered Frances, totally misunderstanding the other. "Then we'll fight against it. He will fight."

The sick man's face was drawn silky yellow, like molasses candy after pulling. Frances leaned over him, listening to the labor of his body and kissed him upon the forehead. "God help us, Edward," she breathed. Far out across the rosy waters the sun had appeared out of its slot in the horizon; the new day had begun.

When she turned, his eyes were opening slowly. Then when he had seen her they shut again and a smile did its best at the stiff white lips.

"Edward, Edward!" she cried, dropping to her knees.

"Frances," he whispered.

"I have come to tell you, you will not die. Do you understand?"

"I'm — I'm dy — I'm dy —" He could not spare the effort of the word and with the strain his eyes were opening again. She looked into them steadily, "Sand! Sand! Sand!" she said. "Fight! Fight!"

"Sand," he repeated, his brain clearing for the moment; "I think I lost my grip. Poor girl, poor girl — our boy. Yes, sand!"

"We've got to fight!"

"We've got to fight," he repeated dully. "Must we fight?" A new flash of intelligence came into his eyes; his hand wandered with creeping fingers like beetles' legs over the sheet. "Food—give us fuel! More fuel!"

Frances reached for the coffee jelly on the table. She knew that she had won the first step of the way. After the torment of the spoonful the eyes closed once more for a moment. "Come on now!" he gasped. "They can't kill me. I understand, dear girl. We're going to fight this out. I mustn't die. I mustn't die. I mustn't die."

"The oxygen!" wailed a voice within her, but the little strip of the white road, which she could see still, winded its way through the low shrubbery, speckless. His fingers had reached her hand after their long journey and rested upon hers. At the touch they strengthened. "The doctor gave it up," he whispered. "He — thought — it — was — all — over. Fight! You can't kill me!"

The man of skill had opened the door softly, closed it, and once more Frances was looking steadily into the eyes of her husband. They were foggy again with unreason.

"Get up, get up," he groaned. "My wind! Ah — that's better. No sooner, no sooner! Frances, oh, I say. The baby. Get off my chest, will you? Fight! Sand! Eh?"

"Fight," she whispered in his ear, with her hand on his pulse, which caught, choked, flung itself loose and was tip-toeing on its way again. Frances tore the collar from her soft neck. He was loving life now like a waterless fish; the droop of his mouth had straightened.

"My slide goes hard," he choked. "Starboard, I think. The pistol! Now! Now! Now! Thunder, they've got us at the very start. That back. See his back with the cussed muscles on it. He clips the stroke. Oh, I say, he clips the — Now! What's the matter with you, cox? You're a disgrace to the university!"

"Fight!" she screamed, then froze with terror that excitement might kill him, but beneath her fingers she imagined that she felt the flicker of his heart gather strength.

"Now! Now! Now!" he called. "See the swing of that cussed back. The catch! The — Oh, Frances. Oh, I say, Frances, I must have been asleep. Tired — very, very tired." He closed his eyes.

"Fight!" said she. A first ray of light caught, for a second, on the top of the window frame, then snapped into the room. "Come on, warm sun!" she cried. "Come on! Come on!"

"Fight!" gasped the man on the bed. "Fight! For you, Frances! Fight! And Hi-boy. Fight!"

Far away across the dunes a church clock recognized the hour with four times a mellow vibration; Frances turned toward the bed and saw that the thread

of life was snapping. There was no manner of telling this, but by the sense of nature and the cold that gleamed icily upon his skin. She was insane, putting her warm hands beneath his ears and whispering, "Fight! Fight! Fight! Fight now, Edward! Fight! Fight, Edward! Fight! Fight!" When he did not answer she did not faint or cry out. She thrashed her own heart that through her hands it might warm his; she repeated the exhortation in violent, savage whispers. The idea of calling help did not occur to her. They were at the edge of the world together and together it was natural and right that they should be alone. A point of light had arisen to swim upon his forehead. "Back into the body, soul," she said, softly.

Finally he writhed in the pain of a new breath; his neck warmed with the feeble tune of the blood.

"Fight!" she said, the world being real again. "Life belongs to us. Fight!"

"Frances—I hear you. More food—more—food."

She fed him with a steady hand, her eyes shining with the triumph of his courage. One of the maids stirring below slammed a door. The noise seemed to shatter the truth of existence, but her hand was still firm. A grotesque shadow slid away along the baseboard of the rooms, crawling stealthily upon its belly. "Fight!" she breathed.

When he had closed his eyes again, she was up on her feet again at the window, gazing down the vacancy of

road. Birds were singing morning songs from the scrub oaks. "How long, oh, how long!" she cried to herself.

"Not at all," her husband was saying; "my client will not allow that sort of settlement. The company will not — The finish! The finish!" he cried, the years slipping back to the river and the crew. "Look at the cussed muscles on that stroke's back. Now! Now! Now!"

Frances felt dizzy for a single moment, but the pain of her clenched hands cleared her eyes, the possibilities thrashed her back into the battle like the beating of an officer's sword. She dropped on her knees beside him. The sunlight was warm upon her back and she moved so that it might fall upon him.

"Edward," she whispered.

"Yes — I'm — fighting. I — will not — die. I — helloa, are you back again, you devil? Let go! Let go! Rush him! Throw him now! Fall on that, you duffer. Let 'em have it!" He opened his eyes unblinkingly at the light. "Why it's day. How long have I been asleep? The pain in my — Yes — The doctor — gave — me — up — didn't — he? I knew. The pain —"

"Fight!" said she, reaching for his pulse. It was marching timidly, but in it was a mild persistence which made her own pulse sing.

"You are beautiful, my girl. I have been so happy with you. And the boy — how is my son? I must live for him — for — you and for — him."

Frances ran to the nursery. The doctor was dejectedly gazing out across the waters, the raw-boned nurse was working upon some embroidery, but the baby, having been awakened, was rolling merrily, his little hands reaching for imaginary caresses. She hurried toward him, snatched him up into her arms. The doctor started to say something, but she had run back to the door, whispering into her son's ear: "Fight — fight!"

"Hoo-gug-gug" cried the baby, stretching out his arms to the sick man, who seemed to grow warm at the sign. "Now," said the latter, hoarsely, but with great conviction, "I cannot die."

The nurse had followed Frances. "The doctor says — let me take him back?" She opened her arms; Frances gave up the baby to them and leaned down to whisper into her husband's ear. The nurse touched her with one hand gently upon her shoulder before she turned to go.

"Fight," said Frances. For many minutes, the time whirling by like the view from a car window, she repeated the word and then, a gift of God, came the sound of wheels, the far-off haste of a horse's gallop. At the window she could see a shaky old carry-all swaying along the white road, a man on the front seat, his arm about a blue cylinder as if it were a human companion. "Fight," she cried, reaching back for her husband's pulse.

In a moment more she came into the nursery, slowly. The doctor and the nurse turned toward her and then dodged each other's eyes.

"The oxygen has come," she said, as coolly as if it had been a tub of ice cream. "It is downstairs." The doctor considered that he had never seen a more wonderfully beautiful woman in his whole life. "And the baby — poor little Hi-boy — poor, little hungry, hungry boy!" She took him to her breast and sat down upon the couch. The doctor suddenly stepped swiftly into the sick-room; the nurse, with her embroidery needle poised in the air, had not moved, looking and looking at the mother with the baby gurgling in the curve of her arm. As she watched she saw the color and the vitality withering like scorched blossoms.

"I've — I've — I have —" gasped Frances, and then slowly toppled over, the baby still comfortable in the curve of her arm.

"She wins!" cried the doctor from the door. "Such a rally. Nine-tenths a dead man and such a rally! What ails you? We're at it again! We've got him now! Get that oxygen up here, nurse, you infernal dummy!"

"Fight!" gasped Frances, and then every muscle in her body loosened.

"Stop!" cried the physician to the nurse. "Leave her alone. We can't fool with *her* now. Get that oxygen up here, I say!"

SERVICE

OVER the City of Washington the sluggish Potomac had thrown its scarf of damp winter mist; dusk added but little to the muddiness of the day. From his office-window high up in the department building, with its musty odors and eternal foot-beats of government clerks, the chief of the Bureau of Water Sheds and Forest Drainage raised his head from a contemplation of a brown and yellow contour-map, saw the dull stare of lights in other office-buildings, and realized that another day was done. Almost at the same moment the ground glass door opened and, framed in gloom, a little man stood there.

"Well," said this stumpy individual, "are you glad to see me, friend Wallace?" He had a brisk, untrammeled voice; he spoke as if he were glad that his words were heard by every one within ordinary hearing and a few others beside.

Wallace rose to the height of his big frame, reached forth his large, impressive, muscular hand and for a moment silently inspected this supposed stranger of windy manners, blithe spirit, little body, prosperous smile and many layers of upholstered clothing.

"Ha, ha!" laughed the newcomer sizably. "Well, I'll tell you. I'm Harry Fanshawe."

"Come into the light," cried Wallace, turning the button. "I'm heartily glad to see you. It has been at least —"

"Just twenty-two years since we graduated," the other interrupted. He smiled as if his ready answer gave him some superiority over his old acquaintance. The desk chair received him. He rubbed his knees like a man well pleased. "Well, Wallace," said he, "I had not been here long before I found out you were here, and I came up. Yes, sir, I came up to see you."

"You are passing through?"

"How's that?"

"Business?"

"Why, no!" cried Fanshawe. "That shows what fame is. I'm a congressman! You didn't know it? Well, well, I declare! Yes, sir. I made my way and saved my pile, and I thought I'd like the honor of the thing — the 'honorable' before my name." He made a pretence of writing it with his finger nail on the gray blotter.

Wallace watched him with some embarrassment. "Perhaps I ought to have known it," said he, suddenly. "But the work here is rather confining in a way. You can do as much as you like for the U.S., or only a little. I am kept busy, however, and after a long term of government service I have gotten rusty on who is who 'up on the hill.' The only congressmen I know are those I see about my recommendations for legislation and —

well, there are not many of them I'd take home to dinner." He paused with some embarrassment.

The other laughed with good cheer. "Yes, yes, I understand perfectly. I'm beginning to understand, now that I'm here in Washington."

"So, congressmen, as such, seem to me merely disagreeable individuals that I have to beg to do the decent thing by whatever work we have planned and think best to put through." Wallace smiled. "You are Harry Fanshawe, of course." He leaned against the wall as if a little weary. "The 'honorable' won't prejudice me against you. I'm mighty glad to see you. Of course I have heard, just heard —"

"It's nothing," exclaimed his old friend, waving his hand. "It's nothing. Of course, I've been successful. Just between ourselves, I never was much fitted for technical training. I wasn't near so good a civil engineer — not in your class. But I made money at it in the West, out in my State, very good money. And when it came to developing water-powers, I saw that it was the promotors who held the money basket. Yes, sir, the big money is in that. Successful? Well, yes, of course. It's nothing."

Wallace gazed back at the man who sat in the desk chair swinging his short and active legs: he knew very well that this old friend had grown rich, that he had acquired a fortune. Somehow all the men of ability who had kept clear of the government service had done very

well. One heard from time to time of their progress, of their handsome salaries; the particular school at which he and they had trained had given them a thorough preparation for success. He knew what nearly all of them had accomplished.

"Let me ask, old man," said Fanshawe, after a moment, "how long have you been in this work — working for Uncle Sam?"

"Ever since I was married."

"What a fool!" ejaculated the other. "Why, my dear fellow, you have more ability at the technical side of things than any of the old boys. You are an authority on the equalization of torrent flow. What a complete, sandpapered, and varnished fool!"

"I know it," replied Wallace.

"And nobody gives a rap about a man who doesn't make money," Fanshawe whispered, in the manner of one who confides commonplace information. "Of course, we hear your name, and we know well enough that the work you have originated and are putting through is big stuff and all that. But you're out of it. We look in the Volume of Estimates to see what you are getting. Pfest! Well! I should say!"

"I know," said Wallace, bitterly. "It's nearly twenty-five hundred dollars a year. Of course, I know what I'm getting."

Fanshawe thrust back his overcoat to insert both hands in his trousers pockets; he jingled his keys, coins,

and other trinkets. "Then why on earth, old man, have you kept on?"

"I don't quite know myself," the chief of the Water Sheds and Forest Drainage replied solemnly. "I can't answer that, to save my life."

The congressman narrowed his eyelids; he stroked his face; he pressed the neatly clipped coarse hair which grew on his upper lip. Wallace noticed how much the other man had coarsened in twenty years. But the motions and appearance of a successful American showed on Fanshawe this moment as if he had been made up to play the part upon a stage. Now he was squinting again as he laid both closed fists upon the desk's edge.

"My friend," he said, "I am here to tell you that you can get three times that money outside."

"Of course," said Wallace. "The Entwhistle Power Corporation has offered me more than that — much more."

"They have?" Fanshawe said. "Why didn't you go with 'em?"

"Oh, I hardly know," replied the engineer. "It went by. There have been several others. They went by."

The congressman changed his expression to one of real concern.

"Wallace, my boy," he said, "it's a mighty serious thing to throw yourself away. It's a mighty serious thing

to drop out of the game. It's confoundedly serious to get to be your age and a little older, too, on less money than you will want to have. Uncle Sam is buying all your efforts, all your life, for twenty-five hundred a year. That's the price — the cheap, bargain-day, confidence-game price that he pays to two or three hundred able men in the departments. They could get more money outside. But they're suckers — they are easy. They stay on." Fanshawe bit at the end of a cigar and rolled it, with a deft tongue, into the other corner of his mouth. "What do I care about 'em? If I went around doing nothing but helping suckers, where would I be? I look after me — myself." He smiled. "But you are my old friend, Wallace." There was a glisten in his eyes. "And I'm here to do what I can to help you — to wake up!"

Wallace laughed. His overcoat hung on a hook fastened into the woodwork; he reached for it.

"Fanshawe," said he, "we don't live very well, but — come home to dinner with me." Some of his youth came back into the voice. "Take pot-luck with us. Come on."

The new congressman thought a moment, as if he were debating whether or not, having the appetite of an affluent bachelor, he should risk an excursion into the household of a married person with meagre salary.

"I'll be delighted," he said suddenly and kindly — as if there had been no hesitation. "I want to talk to you."

He looked around the office with its sombre walls, pic-

tures of irrigation projects, and colored prints furnished by railroad and steamship companies in weathered oak frames; he glanced at the threadbare red carpet and at the file cabinet with a corner of a blue print protruding from the upper drawer.

"This is a dingy old building, eh?" he remarked, starting toward the door. "And the elevator squeaks. It would grate on me all right,— that out-of-date, old elevator."

"It grates on me occasionally," said Wallace, long afterwards, as they stepped out of the building into the fog.

"What?" said Fanshawe, who now was endeavoring to follow the other's long-legged stride.

"The elevator."

"Oh, the old elevator? — sure!" The congressman, used to the dry air of his Western State, turned up the collar of his overcoat. For a time, as the two travelled the busier avenue with its blurred lights and its post-office clock, which was vainly endeavoring to transmit the time of day through the mist, as far as the Treasury Building, Fanshawe puffed his breath into the damp air and occasionally looked up toward the man beside him. He wondered, perhaps, what manner of enslavement kept this other, with all his learning, skill, and originality, in an overcoat which showed wear at the sleeves. When they approached street corners he could see the shiny places at elbows and cuffs.

"Huh," he said finally. "You certainly are a fool. You can't go any higher here in Washington. As far as your particular function and place in the service goes you're at the top. And what is the top? I repeat — why don't you get out?"

"I will," replied Wallace. "Some day, of course, I will. I suppose I ought to do it now."

Fanshawe sniffed.

"When I came here," the engineer explained, "it was just for experience — a part of my training. Then I developed this interest in the relation of the forests to water-power and industry. I want to see these plans of mine put through."

"And," added Fanshawe, "you'll wonder when you've finished why the newspapers will give all the credit to some politician with a breath that smells of cloves, and forget to mention your name at all."

Wallace laughed. "How did you know that?" he inquired ironically. "I found it out twelve years ago. But you've only been in Washington for a month or two."

He increased the rapidity of his stride.

"Oh, it will happen in your case, anyway," said Fanshawe, disregarding the sarcasm of the other man. You are not the noisy kind. Quiet and good-natured. What does your wife say to this? I've never seen her. I remember getting cards to your blow-out. What does *she* say?"

"Oh, she?" said Wallace, unoffended. "Oh, she is satisfied."

"Ha!" Fanshawe exclaimed, as if to indicate that his friend now exposed the secret. He glanced up at the Capitol building which they were now passing. Its stateliness loomed up darkly.

"Magnificent building," said the congressman. "They could hardly do better to-day, I suppose. Well, well. Don't be satisfied, Wallace. It's better never to be satisfied. Now, to be a little more concrete — Is this where you live? An apartment, eh?"

"Yes, confound it — an apartment," said Wallace, with his key in the varnished door. "I don't think a real whole man could live in an apartment."

"Pooh — pooh!" Fanshawe puffed on the stairs. "Ever see those in New York? Cost seven or eight thousand a year. Magnificent. Simply palatial."

The host looked a bit discomfited, but he met his wife at the door with a cheery smile, and he introduced Fanshawe to her, and to his little make-believe home, with no outward show of embarrassment.

The congressman was one of a class of men who regard women as rather unimportant except as to their capacity for making trouble. He thought any woman was very passable who had the negative virtues. Mrs. Wallace seemed to him to be one of those numerous young wives who bravely endeavor to do their own housework, have such children as come to them, and still

keep themselves as young as possible in appearance, as gay as possible in spirit. He could see that she was not extraordinarily endowed with physical attractions; she was too short, too freckled; her lips were too thin; she looked too tired. All the commonplaceness of a wife and a mother had attached itself to her. She was the average married woman — the average American woman who has a husband and children. She carried the last-born in the crook of her tired arm, into which it seemed to fit as if her arm had been made for it. Fanshawe had a vague impression of other children about. He thought he saw Wallace greet one of them — a little boy — and perhaps others, just before they all sat down to dinner.

Mrs. Wallace was bringing the things in from the kitchen herself. She managed matters well in such a small, stuffy little place, and wore a very clean white apron which reminded him of his own mother.

"My, my, it's a great treat to get a home dinner," he exclaimed generously, but he covertly drew a wry face as he noticed that the first course of the meal consisted of the roast and the vegetable.

All in all, Fanshawe was glad when the dinner was over. He knew very little of topics of conversation with which one could interest the average American housewife. Politics, dam-projects, and investments would hardly do, and as usual in the presence of women he questioned his own sense of humor and was obliged to

proceed cautiously. What he had said on one or two occasions when dining out in New York had not been received enthusiastically. Therefore, he now kept along the way of the ordinary question and answer form of conversation and let his self-assertiveness exhibit itself only in the size of his voice. The cramped little dining-room was filled by it and it rang on the vestiges of cut-glass wedding presents which were displayed on the embroidered cloth of the sideboard. There was something of a relief when Wallace, who had been serious and thoughtful during the meal, suggested that they go together into the sitting-room to smoke.

"I have a real cigar here," explained the chief of Water Shed and Forest Drainage, fumbling in a box full. By his remark one might have supposed that the rest were only imitations. He offered it to Fanshawe with a kindly beam in his eyes. "I've been keeping it for just such an occasion, Harry." Fanshawe rolled the weed in his stocky fingers. It crackled dryly. "Great Heavens!" he thought, "he hasn't smoked it himself. He's been economizing his hospitality. He's been saving it up for somebody to entertain with it!"

He put the cigar in his mouth, allowed Wallace to reach forward a lighted match, puffed out the smoke, and glanced about.

The room made pretense of being what is called a parlor; it endeavored to be as comfortable as a living room; it did not quite succeed in either. The congressman

thought the impossible had been bravely attempted by Mrs. Wallace. The chamber seemed to him brave and pathetic — more brave and pathetic than it was, in truth. He had a touch of emotion. Poor old Wallace! Wallace indeed needed awakening. He needed relief, and Fanshawe was here to offer it to him because, though he had not seen his friend for twenty years, he had reached a stage in life when he had counted his real friends and found them few. He had thought of Wallace as an addition to the list of three. It had given him joy. Wallace, by George, would be a friend always. Wallace was that kind.

"I said when we were coming up the steps that I wanted to be a little more concrete," said Fanshawe, letting his words step on the heels of his thoughts. "And frank, too, but I did not hunt you out because I wanted to tell you that you are throwing yourself away."

The congressman paused as if to see what the other had to say to this.

"I understand," returned Wallace. He indicated by a motion of his large, muscular hands that Fanshawe might say what he liked.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed the latter quickly, "look at this! Look where you live. Wallace, my good fellow, you're growing old poor, and what have you to show for it? A wife and three babies and four hundred dollars' worth of furniture. That's what government

service has done for you. Pooh! I'm the kind of man that talks straight out, and let me tell you what spells success for us fellers to-day — dollars!" He was interrupted by a violent fit of coughing. "What we want is money and a house that people will look at — a rip-snorting house! They'll say, 'Wallace lives there.' Will they say, 'Wallace is a good fellow' or 'Wallace is an authority on torrents who is connected with the Department of Commerce and the Interior?' No, sir! They'll say, 'Wallace — very successful — he's made money!' That's what they'll say. They'll say you've got two motor cars and your daughter had a what-you-may-call-'em — a coming-out this winter — swell business!" He pounded his chair-arm softly and dropped his voice to a whisper like a stump-speaker about to create an impression. "Dollars! dollars! dollars!" said he.

Wallace pretended that he was not much affected by this philosophy. He stared at what might have been an open fireplace had it not been a space covered with conventional green cartridge-paper beneath the machine-made mantelpiece. And yet at last he nodded solemnly.

"You know it's true!" exclaimed Fanshawe explosively, "and I'm a man of plain words. Nothing ought to keep you back. No, sir." He hesitated a moment for the purpose of showing hesitation. Then he fired at what he supposed was the bull's eye. "Not even your wife," he said.

Wallace looked up quickly. He wore an expression which the congressman could not interpret, but, fearing to be misunderstood, the latter enlarged his meaning. "Women don't know what a man's game is," he explained. "Your wife don't know how important it is for you to get out now — it's late enough already — and hustle — play the big game!"

"Oh, she would like the dollars," replied Wallace, standing up. The corners of his large mouth fell a little. "She works too hard," he said, as if meditating aloud. "I ought to fix it so's I could give her more — so's there'd be a relief."

"Exactly," said Fanshawe, nasally. "Exactly! And here is what I had to say to you. You know me. I'm at the top in my part of the country. I have a controlling interest at the present day in the Myodale Improvement Company, and I've developed in my State in the last ten years water horse-power that aggregate — Why, what's the use of talking. Come with me, Wallace, I can use you this minute. I'm here in congress — you see. I'll give you three times what you are getting now. Why? Because I like you? No, sir! Because you are worth it!" He leaned back in his chair, regarding the other with a wide stare as if to say, "There you have the whole matter."

"I wanted to finish this work here that I've begun," said Wallace looking at the floor. "It's going to be tremendously important to the country. I —"

"That's it!" exclaimed Fanshawe viciously. "There's the word — I! me! myself! Think of that! Where do you come in? But thunder! if you're going to —"

"Wait!" interrupted Wallace, squaring his jaw, "I was going to say that in spite of all the reasons — such as they are—that might keep me here, this time —" He looked up.

His wife stood in the doorway.

"I've put the children to bed," said she, "and now I can sit down a moment."

The congressman arose awkwardly.

"I just couldn't help catching scraps of your talk," she went on, seating herself on the edge of the chair in the manner of one who must soon get up again. She looked toward her husband anxiously; then toward their guest. "You seemed to be discussing how poorly paid the government service is, but you won't urge my husband to leave it, Mr. Fanshawe?"

For the first time the congressman found himself looking squarely into her steady brown eyes; he was shrewd enough to meet the situation broadside. "That is just what I've been doing," said he, with a sharp laugh.

Mrs. Wallace laughed, too. "And that is why I came in," she said easily. "I have heard very nearly all that has been said. I couldn't help it." She brushed a lock of hair from her forehead. "I don't

want to have my husband make a change now. I think it is his duty to stay here. Perhaps you think I should not hasten to say this, now. Perhaps you will not like me for it?"

"Oh, my, no," stammered Fanshawe.

He was sharp enough to see, having met her in contest, that he had made a mistake in her importance. She was a partner; she spoke with the confidence of a partner. The Westerner at once assumed the position of talking to both members of the firm.

"Mrs. Wallace," he said, "an opportunity is an opportunity. If you have heard what I said to your husband — my old friend — you will know what I think about his opportunities here in Washington." He leaned forward toward her.

"We have often talked of them," said Wallace, addressing his wife with a note of affection in his voice.

"Often," said she. "I know that there is not any chance of advancement. We are not in politics." She smiled. "And we get so little that we cannot save anything — scarcely anything."

"And there is no particular honor — that is, no reward of that kind?" Fanshawe added interrogatively.

"Perhaps not," admitted the wife cheerfully.

"In another place outside — such as I offer, Mrs. Wallace — you could be independent, if I may say so. And even if the material things — or whatever you call 'em — the things that you can buy with money, don't

appeal to you, then there's this — the children. I suppose you'd want the children to have them." Fanshawe imagined that he had touched a sensitive spot.

"Oh, I like them myself," said Mrs. Wallace. "I like them and want them as much as the average woman. I think they are very tempting."

"Oh, you deserve them," said the congressman, sincerely, though he used the insincere diction of a man who is used to insincerity. "You deserve them now — when youth is still with you. You must not be tired out at the beginning."

He noticed again how weary were her eyes, how listless, except in moments of tension, were her hands; he knew he had told the truth.

"At the beginning?" repeated Mrs. Wallace vexingly. "I cannot thank you enough. You truly make me feel as if it were so."

"Well, then," suggested the congressman, tenaciously holding to his argument, "what can hold Wallace here? Not money? Not honors, not lack of ability, not any promise, not any contract? Then what?"

"It's very hard to say in a few words," the woman answered quietly, "but if I had to say it briefly I should just say — 'service.'"

"Service?" exclaimed the congressman. "Service?"

"Yes, that is it," she repeated, "service. Don't you think there is something fine in the word? Why! when I tell people that my husband is in the govern-

ment service I fell real pride — pride in the word 'service' and pride in the word 'government.'" Even as she said it she raised her head. "But 'service' I think is the finest."

Wallace looked quickly from his wife to Fanshawe. The latter moved his chin a little forward over his collar with a puzzled expression, waiting for her to say more.

"Possibly I might not feel so satisfied about it," the woman went on, "if my husband didn't have so big a work before him. It is all his own, in a way. He thought it up. He originated it. We like to think of that. And I look forward to seeing him finish it. I can't tell you how much I look forward to the time when it will be done. I suppose he explained to you how important it will be to the country — how it will benefit so many industries, and how it will in the end mean factories and towns and new villages where there weren't any before, with people going home to their suppers in houses with lights in the windows — all new!"

Fanshawe nodded gravely, fingering his watch chain.

"I like to dream about it like that," said Mrs. Wallace. She had a soft, pleasing voice. "And then, besides, I'm sure that there is much satisfaction in 'service.' I like to think" — she turned toward her husband — "that he is serving the United States. I'm sure it will be pleasant for our boys to know about it." She paused. The two men were looking at her intently.

She arose with a quiet, contented smile curving her lips.

"Perhaps we cannot leave them much money," she said suddenly. "But I can tell them that their father served here, cheerfully and without hope of reward." Her voice trembled a little. "I shall tell them that he served the United States."

Her husband looked down at the machine-made mantelpiece and drew his finger along the pressed wood ornaments. Fanshawe examined his cuff-links.

"It is much better," added his wife, "for us to live modestly and have what we have now — so complete a happiness and so comfortable a feeling. I do my own work here, as you see. But even when I am tired I am glad that we have not taken up any of the offers that we have had. The service is much finer. Don't you see that there is magic in the word 'service,' Mr. Fanshawe? Isn't there magic in the sound of the words, 'The United States?'"

"You bet!" exclaimed the congressman. "You bet there is!"

The woman walked quickly to the bay window and raised the curtain. The mist had gone. Into the blue-black dome of heaven the dome of the Capitol raised its head toward the stars.

"Will you stand here, Mr. Fanshawe?" she said in a clearer voice.

The congressman came and gazed over her shoulder.

"I think that is a wonderful thing to look upon," she continued. "I see it all the time — many times a day and yet it always affects me the same way. Why, Mr. Fanshawe, it seems to me as if the soul of my country was in that dome!"

"Well, that's so," the congressman said.

Mrs. Wallace turned away but he still stood there looking out at the dome with the starlit sky behind.

"Service," said he, softly, to himself.

But when he looked back into the room with a word on his lips for Mrs. Wallace she had gone. The faint crying of an infant coming from somewhere down the narrow apartment hall gradually lapsed into the back and forth sound of a rocking-chair. The two noises suggested that the eternal duties of a mother had called her. Fanshawe coughed and Wallace looked up.

"Where are the matches?" asked the guest, plucking the ragged edges of his cigar with his thumb and forefinger. He lit the stump with his head thrown back so that the flame should not burn the tip of his nose. Once he drew in his breath as if he were about to speak, but he exhaled it again with an audible sigh. The sound of the rocking-chair had ceased. The chief of the Bureau of Water Sheds and Forest Drainage watched the congressman narrowly.

"Well," said the latter finally. "I've had a good evening, Wallace. I must go. Let me tell you, old Wallace, I've had a good evening. A feller gets new points

of view, don't he?" And then as if embarrassed he looked quickly about him for his hat and overcoat. "No, I must go," he repeated starting down the corridor.

At one of the open doorways of the hall Fanshawe stopped. "Look!" he whispered to Wallace.

Within the room, though the light was turned low, they could see a child's bed with one small head dark upon the pillow. Beside this crib, where one corner of the coverlet had been turned down, sat the mother, the youngest baby in her arms. Both of them were motionless and silent in sound sleep.

"That's a pretty picture, Wallace," said Fanshawe, tenderly. "She must have been tired, eh? — very tired."

"I'll wake her," said the husband, laughing. "She'll want to say 'good-night' to you."

"No, no, no!" protested the congressman, hurrying toward the rack where hung his coat and hat. "I like them that way," he explained in awkward artistic appreciation. Then suddenly he recovered his wonted manner.

"Oh, about that matter," he began briskly, "Why — to thunder with it, Wallace! You're fixed all right. Keep right on. You know me. You know the kind of feller I am. If I can ever help you with anything 'up on the hill,' let me know. Sure thing. I'll see you again soon. I want to come around here again. You're fixed all right — wife, children — the whole outfit.

The right stuff. Yes, sir, you're all right, Wallace. Good-night, Wallace. Don't get to envying me, old man. I've made my pile, but — hell!"

He shook the other's hand and was gone.

When Wallace went to pull down the curtain of the living-room, where wisps of cigar-smoke still lingered, he saw Fanshawe down on the corner, standing in the circle of light from the street lamp, gazing and gazing upward — at the dome of the Capitol.

THE WHITE HAND

ELEANOR PERRITON had awakened with a start as if some sharp noise had broken her sleep. She had dozed off into unconsciousness again. And again, how long afterward she did not know, she found her eyes wide open and her ears listening from a premonition of evil.

For a moment she could not remember where she was. The bare, rough board walls over the eaves, the black stove pipe that ran from the floor to the ridge, the rude furniture, the line of men's clothes that hung listlessly on the nails like criminals in chains, she saw through a gloom that was not lightened much by the square of window at the foot of her cot. The sharp contrast between these surroundings and those to which she had been accustomed through her girlhood awoke in her the memory of some insistent demands made by her to join somewhere her husband, who was engaged in a gigantic undertaking of some kind. She remembered that she had been married several months. Yesterday, for some business reason, her husband had been forced to go to some city not far away. Then she remembered where she was. She was the only woman in the "camp!"

As she rose to go to the window she was conscious that this little room above the "Offices of the Construction Engineer" seemed stuffy and overheated. She

wondered if she had a fever; in the seven weeks that she had been at the "work" where everything was cold, ice, and snow, this was the first time that she had felt really warm.

Some of the apparently eternal snow and ice still clung to the towering ridges of Mannix Butte across the yawn of the river bed, and the full moon, popping out of scout clouds, which preceded a marching, black bank of their fellows, whitened the jagged valley of the Red Rope River and threw dark purple shadows of isolated pines that had dared the "bad lands." The rock ledges that projected here and there in precipitous deserts of gray gravel, where the snow had melted with the early spring, seemed more prominent and threatening than they ever had in the sunlight.

The region was one of gigantic proportions. To realize this in full measure it was necessary to have men and their habitations upon its horizontal and perpendicular expanses. As Eleanor Perriton looked out over the lesser shacks of the construction camp with their lights and black, tar-papered roofs, the barracks, stables, tool shelters of a thousand men, as she saw the dark specks moving about like ants in the excavations beyond and below, and watched the tiny, bobbing flecks of light from their lanterns, the awe of the undertaking which her husband had planned, and now had nearly executed, seized her as it always seized her when she gazed upon its pretentious, man-made miracles.

The "work" was thirty miles up a bare country, uninhabited except by occasional sheep ranchers whose flocks found some nourishment along the way of the Red Rope. The shacks that had been built at the site of the Mannix Falls Power Company's future station constituted a temporary town. Above this settlement was a coffer-dam scooped up from the river bed and as large as three city blocks. It had the daring to hold back the river in a wide lake between the walls of the buttes, and on the dry side of it a hole had been dug for the dam foundation — an excavation the width of the river bed and seventy feet below the surface of the lake, into which for a period of two or three weeks the dump trains, the rumbling concrete mixers, the huge chutes and a gang of haste-maddened men had poured nineteen hundred tons of stone, gravel, and cement every twenty-four hours. Cube after cube of the dam had been set in this way until the buttress had extended half across from the other precipitous shore.

Eleanor never tired of watching the work; her whole attitude toward her husband had changed from the moment she first had stood with him on an eminence below the camp and had seen the vast upheaval of earth, the scoopings, gauges, scratchings, borings, blastings, and to her had come the shouts of many men, the shriek of wire cables, the puffings of donkey engines, the rumble of construction trains, the smell of steam and of the bituminous smoke, which, wafted out of the pit, stained

with its smirchy trail the white-clad sides of the cliffs.

As she looked out of the window now, even after the cloud bank from the west had gulped the moon, she could see the whole panorama. She could see the water swirling viciously above the upper coffer-dam in the black-wind-whipped lake, she could see it foaming half a mile below beneath the lower coffer-dam. Across the top of this lower dam a dump train, with its engine dropping hot coals from the fire-box, was lurching, bearing four cars of dirt torn by the steam shovels out of the groove in the river which would one day be the trail-race of the power station. She could see the little dark spot at the bottom of the dam excavation, made by the water that filtered in through a fault in the ledge foundation. It was with this pool that five massive centrifugal pumps were unceasingly fighting, discharging untiringly through great canvas pipes endless columns of water as thick as tree trunks. And between all this maze of construction, derricks, engines, eternal turmoil and noise, and the stillness and solitude of the cliffs on the far bank, ran a flume, a mighty plank trough on massive timber braces, as wide as a city cross-street, built to follow the curve of the shore and carrying between its sides an insane rush of water at the speed of eighteen miles an hour.

She could see the white wave-tops in it now, lapping the edges of the top planks, piling over each other like sheep running through a passageway, in haste to get out

at the other end. She could hear the roar of the water as it flung out into the river again, and as she looked and listened she shivered.

From the moment when she had first realized the drama of the project, even her external attitude toward her husband had changed. She had hitherto known a city home and a country house, where all that affluence could buy of comfort and service, all that family tradition could supply of polite manners and respectable customs, had been enjoyed by her as a matter of course. There had been a boarding school and then social life and finally a marriage. John Perriton, her husband, in the first year of their life together, had apparently burned out his experience in his affection. So it had seemed to her. He had, so far as she could see, gone back to a passion for his profession, back to a consuming madness for some activity, the nature of which she could not well imagine and for which she, consequently, had no respect. Even their companionship had lost its warmth, from whose fault it was impossible to say. She found that she no longer seemed to interest him. He had spent his evenings poring over plans of the Red Rope Dam. She had seen the legends on the blue-prints. Then, finally, like an unleashed dog, he had gone eagerly from her to spend the winter in this Dakota barren. It had not seemed to her that there could be anything about building a dam that was beyond the realm of things technical, commonplace, and material.

It was the confession that she had made to herself that after all the marriage had been a mistake, which caused her to be alarmed at their separation. She had become hardened to the idea, false as it was, that he no longer loved her, but the fancy that she would soon no longer love him filled her with unreasoning terror. In spite of all that he or his family could argue, she had insisted upon following him to the barrens early in March.

Her intuition had not been wrong. Although his undertaking still seemed to consume the whole of his daily supply of mental and spiritual energy, so that nothing apparently was left for her, yet her eyes had opened to the drama which so held him. She had seen the fire of creation in his eyes day in and day out, hour after hour, week after week; had been infected by his daring, chance-taking spirit, and had felt the strength of will which kept him at the fight all the days and some of the nights, with his hair in disorder, black rings under his eyes, and his jaws set like the jaws of a metal vise. During their engagement and short married life hitherto she had known little of the true romance of man's conquest over matter, less of the true nature of John Perriton, her husband. In the weeks at the camp since he had greeted her with a half-concealed wry face, she had passed through the new sensations of respecting him and of finally falling completely in love, with a passion based upon stronger grounds than mere sentimen-

tality or fancy. Her heart sang of it, her will determined to draw from her husband a return of the same quality of affection.

Lifted completely out of the life she had always led and set down in a community of builders and laborers, the only woman among ten hundred men, she had devoted her energies at first to making comfortable the quarters of her husband and his older, cold-mannered, self-satisfied assistant, Nathan Rumsey. A week had not passed, however, before she found that in spite of total unfamiliarity with matters of the kind, her whole mind was bent toward learning the story of the drama which was being played before her.

It was a drama! For in the space between the two coffer-dams a wide river had been lifted out of its bed, and in the yawning hole there grunted and sweated great gangs of sullen laborers, there puffed and groaned huge engines, pumps, and machinery in a desperate race against spring. A million and a half dollars had gone into the work in seven months. A whim of the river might wash it away in six minutes. Completion of the dam had to be accomplished before any freshets had swollen the river to a point where the wooden flume would no longer carry it and, bursting the plank walls or pouring over the top, the indignant waters would inundate the site of the work. Should this happen, the next swelling of the river might carry away the coffer-dam. To win this race would mean a triumph; to lose

it would be to lose project, machinery, and perhaps men. Man and nature had met there in a desperate contest. Each day the dam under construction crept farther toward the goal of the opposite shore; each day spring, with its warmth, melting of mountain snows, ice jams and freshets, marched nearer from the south. Already the flume shook with mad, racing water. Already the big pumps contested the leakage into the pit inch by inch, losing or gaining. Already the jealous Rumsey, foreseeing Perriton's defeat, was advising compromising with the enemy and taking measures of retreat.

"Build the dam!" Perriton had said. "Let the flume alone. We'll beat the river!"

"But we're hard pressed already," Rumsey had argued, plucking at his prematurely gray hair.

"See the owners, then," Perriton had answered, conscious of his assistant's disloyalty. "While I'm in charge here, we'll win or lose, just as we are working now. I'll be back here in a day and a half. You're taking orders from me and I say keep on! Give the men life-preservers when they work below the water level and get the concrete in! Get it in!"

Eleanor remembered this dialogue. She had sensed the character of the older engineer almost from the first. She had spoken of it to her husband, who had shaken his head patronizingly. But she had been right. A woman might be of help after all. She felt just now,

when the slightest matters counted one way or the other in this throwing of dice with nature, this struggle between winter and spring, this fight between man and river, now at the crisis, that she might by some unforeseen chance take a hand in the game. As well as a girl might, she had learned the strategies of the contest, had trained her senses to the signs of gain or loss.

Now, standing before the little bedroom window, she imagined that the sense of impending evil with which she had awakened perhaps had some connection with the unusual activity down in the river bed. She could hear among the familiar sounds of rumbling rock crushers and panting dump trains more than the usual reverberation of hoarse shouts. It seemed to her as if the Red Rope itself, swirling by the upper coffer-dam and plunging down the full flume, was speaking more viciously than ever.

She threw open the window. From her lips came an exclamation of surprise. A blast of wind blew the hair back from her forehead, and it was warm! Even as she stood there, frightened by the old terror of a rising thermometer, there sounded on the upper window-pane the slap of two drops of rain.

Rain!

Eleanor ran for a morning gown which hung over the trunk in the corner. She could hear the sound of some one walking about in the office below. By the flare of a match she saw that it was not yet midnight, and as if the

panic which had seized the camp had filled the very air with germs of contagion, she found herself shaking as she descended the stairs.

Rumsey was alone in the office. He looked up at her with a half-frightened expression on his white, tired face, as she appeared like a vision through the doorway. He had on a leather jacket, stained with machine grease, and evidently he had just come in, for the green-shaded light above him shone upon drops of water which still stood upon his cap or which had fallen from it upon the disorder of correspondence and blue-prints.

"What is the matter?" he said. "Is there anything I can get for you?"

"No," she said, watching his expression. "The warmth — the rain."

He stared back at her for a moment. Then he said slowly and incisively: "Yes. I am afraid it will throw us. There has been a steady rise since noon — an extraordinary rise, Mrs. Perriton, since nine o'clock to-night. I have had no sleep. I've been watching the flume. It is at the brim. One or two planks have gone out. The water is running at the rate of twenty-two miles an hour. The game is up — probably all over."

"What can be done?" she said shortly, as he rose to his feet.

"We have built aprons along the outside of the flume in twelve places. You asked John about them — what they were for. Do you remember? Well, we will

knock the boards out above those aprons and relieve the strain by the discharge."

"That means filling the excavation with water?"

He looked up at her, frowning as if her interrogation was not pleasing him.

"Yes, yes," he said.

"But John said not to do that," she insisted. "I heard him tell you that it would lose twenty thousand dollars' worth of equipment and half a million of labor."

Rumsey reddened. "I'm sorry, Mrs. Perriton. I'm terribly busy. There are no moments to lose. You will excuse me? But wait! I'll tell you what will happen if we do not relieve the strain. The flume will burst near the coffer-dam. The flank of that dam will wash out. The lake above will plunge full into our work. It will be a different kind of ruin. It will be a complete — absolutely a complete wreck!" His fist came down among the papers; his narrow shoulders were set forward.

"But John said to take the chance."

"Well, you listen!" the engineer burst out wrathfully. "I'm in charge in his absence. I've followed his orders for six months now and with not an ounce of faith in success either. Now, by thunder! there is a new situation. It's my discretion now by all the rules of good organization. He is away. I'm responsible. The situation has changed. The whole thing is threatened." His voice softened as he saw the expression in

her face. "And of course you understand, Mrs. Perriton," he said in a soothing tone.

"Have you telephoned him?" she asked, stepping forward.

He laughed outright. "My dear lady!" he exclaimed with insincere good nature. "Have you any familiarity with the sheep ranch service up here? Do you think I could give him any adequate notion of the situation anyway? Do you think I could spend the time to do it?"

"What is being done?" she asked, pointing out the window, which rattled in the wind.

"We are preparing to open the flume. It's none too soon. You hear that rain? It's a torrent."

To her it seemed that his excuse about the telephone was feeble, that it was to all intents an admission on his part that he wanted no interference at this crisis with his own discretion and will, that he intended to act now in such a way that the owners of the dam and the engineering partnership which employed him could not find any fault. He had nothing to lose, he had doubtless expressed covertly his dissent to her husband's plans, and where the question was a close one he would act to prove that Perriton was wrong.

Her anger and her loyalty as a wife rose immediately with this conclusion. She flung open the door of the office, facing the gale and rain, for a moment trying to see again the angry waves in the flume. A lantern was

coming unsteadily up the hill. The figure which accompanied it was large enough to be that of Hennessey, the big construction boss. Beyond that figure, however, she could see nothing but the shadowy top of Mannix Butte against the blacker sky.

She allowed the vicious wind to shut the door after her. Rumsey's papers rustled violently in the draft before the slam. He looked up at her insultingly as she ran into the closet where the telephone to the Junction was screwed against the wall.

She turned the crank violently with trembling fingers. She knew how often the instrument was useless. Waiting breathlessly, she pulled the door shut. The recess had been built to hold the plans and files, and its darkness smelled of tracing paper and chemicals.

She rang the bell again. The minutes passed. No answer came. She waited with straining ears, rang again, waited. Footsteps sounded on the outside of the door, and the voice of Rumsey. Never had she known the instincts of the liar. But neither had she ever lived in events which demanded lies. Now it was the only thing to do! Deceit had become a virtue!

"John," she said in a loud, clear voice, "Can you hear me? You say nothing is to be done except keep on with the concrete work. I can't hear you now. Yes, I hear. You understand the situation? All right, John. I will tell Mr. Rumsey. I will call him."

She pushed open the door and stared into the sudden

glare of light from the office until her wide ingenuous eyes had found their focus upon the engineer's face.

"You didn't get him? At this time of night!" he exclaimed. "Why, I — er ——" He stopped in his embarrassment.

"He is ready to speak with you," said Eleanor easily. "He has ordered that no water be let over the flume. He is ready to take the chances. And he wants to give *you* some *orders*, Mr. Rumsey."

The other vented an exclamation of anger as she arose and handed him the receiver of the dead instrument. He took it rudely and sat back on the edge of a card file.

"Hello," he said. "Hello, hello." For a moment he listened. "He's gone."

"Gone?" cried the girl, opening her blue eyes in perfectly simulated surprise. "Gone?"

"Hello, hello. Yes. There is not a sound."

"He said —" she began, leaning eagerly toward Rumsey, "he said that he wanted no water let in on the work. He said to keep on. He said it would be colder to-morrow! He sent his orders. The rules of organization, Mr. Rumsey —"

"Why, of course," he mumbled. "I —"

Then he stopped in his turn. Slowly he placed the receiver back on its hook. He looked at her with a leering smile.

"Very clever," he said sarcastically. "For a mo-

ment I did not remember that the switch was not thrown in. Quite a little comedy, Mrs. Perriton. You are an actress!"

Her cheeks flushed. She kept her face toward his conceited, contemptuous, snarling countenance for a moment. Then she brushed back a strand of her hair carelessly and said, "Perhaps you had better look again."

The moment that he leaned forward to raise the receiver, the moment in which, after a pause of doubt, he had turned away, she clutched the edge of the rough plank door, threw her weight against it and turned the key in the lock. From behind the boards there sounded one clearly enunciated oath.

It was not followed by others. The office was ominously silent. But the oath had a terrifying sound as it was repeated over and over again by Eleanor, involuntarily. Over the wash sink in the corner of the office was a looking-glass. She stood before it and was rather surprised to find that she appeared substantially as herself; she had been conscious of entering a new world.

This new world seemed to whirl about her. She dipped her hand into the bucket of water on the shelf and wiped it across her forehead. It was necessary to think and to act. She knew that the other inferior officers of the camp were either taking short snatches of sleep or were down in the work bellowing orders. What steps had been taken to break out sections of the flume she

could not know. But she had determined to exert her will in this emergency. She was confident that her husband, had he been present, would have insisted upon gambling with the river. His courage had never been turned by the threats of the waters and she determined in this, the tightest place of all, to represent him in unfailing hope of success, to play doubles or quits with the world of nature, with spring, the thermometer, the warmth, the rain and the Red Rope River! And, leaning against the rough wall with her lips and teeth pressed against the white flesh of her forearm, she prayed for the strength of the flume he had built, for clear skies and a wind from the north.

Suddenly she was conscious that some one was fumbling with the outer door. It was plain to her that the imprisoned Rumsey, mumbling threats and entreaties which she refused to hear, was hoping for this very event — the arrival of one of the men — to effect his escape. She therefore ran toward the door, but her movement had not been quick enough to prevent the entrance of Hennessey, the big foreman.

The moment she saw him, she knew that he had been drinking. That his big frame demanded liquor after losses of sleep and unusual labors, that he could, when this thirst came to him, find alcohol in the midst of a desert, she had learned from John. He had said of the Irishman that he was, under the influence of liquor, more efficient than ever, but a brute, morally blind, of

whom all the Italians were desperately frightened and who might at any moment become terrible and dangerous to any one who crossed his will.

Hennessey now surveyed her with red, unblinking eyes. Then he laughed, pulled off his woolen cap, flung it to the floor, and with a raucous voice he said, "I weren't thinkin' of seein' you, Missus." He pointed at her with a thick black forefinger. "Yer up early. May be we disturbed yer. The blasted river is givin' us what for, my girl."

"Still working in the pit?" she inquired, stepping away from him.

"Yes, gettin' ready to save some of the stuff, but soon we'll be doin' other work, I'm thinkin'. The first gang of the day shift is out now. It's by Rumsey's orders. They're to cut out the boards on the flume, I hear. The chief has sent for me. Where is he?"

The answer to his loud questioning words returned immediately. "Hennessey, let me out!" came the muffled voice of the "man in charge." "Let me out! Let me out!"

"Hello!" said the Irishman. "What's all this? Have ye jailed him, me lady? Fer 'tis no time fer monkey shines, ma'am." He took a step forward.

"Wait!" said Eleanor. "You don't know the story."

She was backing toward the centre of the room as he advanced. Then as she felt the edge of the desk she

reached down dexterously for an object that she had more than once seen in the bottom drawer. The very touch of the handle filled her with terror, but nevertheless she drew it forth, hiding it in the folds of her gown.

Hennessey stopped. He had seen the gleam of metal.

"What's the matter here?" he asked, lurching forward threateningly.

"Let me out, Hennessey, confound you!" came the muffled shout from the closet.

Mrs. Perriton moved away from the desk. "Stop where you are," said she to the foreman in a low tone.

"Ye have a gun there," Hennessey growled. "What's goin' on here? Go easy wid that gun. Blast ye, ma'am, don't be gettin' gay wid me. Ye'd not fire it, anyway."

"Take another step toward that closet and see!" she said softly.

The big Irishman rubbed his tangle of hair, hitched up his trousers, and scraped his rubber boot on an uneven board of the floor. Then he laughed drunkenly. "I believe ye'd do it," he said, slapping his leg. "S'help me, I believe ye'd shoot. Sure it's enough to make a cow laugh. Yer the first sowl in this camp'd dare to make free wid *me*, ma'am."

"Thank you," said Eleanor. "But don't move."

"Let me out! Help there!" sounded the angry voice of Rumsey.

"Have ye got him locked up, ma'am?" asked Hen-

nessey. "Ho, ho," he roared. "Yer cuttin' up tricks when yer husband is away and the river is raisin' the divil. Ye have him locked up!"

"Yes," said she. "I have him locked up. And, Mr. Hennessey, I'm depending on you. You're man enough to help me."

"'Tis warm in here, ma'am," he mumbled, swaying on his feet. "Say no more till I have a bit of a pull on the whiskey in my pocket here, ma'am, beggin' yer pardon."

He retreated to a chair, where he sat down. He was wiping the neck of the bottle on his coat sleeve.

"Let me out!" came the voice from the closet across the long office.

Hennessey smiled. "Time is short, ma'am," he said. "I soon must be back on the job, ma'am, — with orders. But have a drink wid me, ma'am."

Eleanor with the revolver still in her hand stepped toward him, took the proffered bottle and, raising it to her lips, drank. The stuff gagged her and brought tears to her eyes, but she smiled and said, "Thank you. That was very nice."

"Ma'am," said he, after he had gulped down his own draught, "put the gun away. 'Tis a bad thing fer a lass to be a-handlin' of it. Sure ye must say now what's the matter, ma'am."

"Nothing's the matter," she said. "Except for this night I'm your boss, Hennessey." She was making a

great effort to keep her voice steady and the hot fumes of the whiskey were helping her. "Rumsey is in the closet. I locked him in. It's none of your business."

"I must have orders," said the foreman, doggedly.

"Who gave you the last?"

"Mr. Perriton, ma'am, this mornin' gone."

"What were they?"

"To put the whole force to work on the concrete fillin', ma'am."

"Those were the last?"

"Yes."

"Well," she said in a harsh voice that was unfamiliar to her own ears, "they stand!"

"Stand!" repeated Hennessey. "Sure, ma'am, ye cannot have yer way with the camp against ye — not five minutes from now, if I called the boys in the engineer's barracks or them on the work."

She thought a minute before she raised her voice to say, "Suppose Mr. Perriton were here. Do you think he would let any water down on the work?"

Hennessey sat up straight in his chair and shook his fist into the air. "No," he exclaimed. "He's the bye fer takin' a chance. Rain an' thaw ner nothin' can't bend him, ma'am. He's a fighter, ma'am. He's sure a man. He's that kind — a fighter."

"And what would you say, Mr. Hennessey?" She looked squarely into his bloodshot eyes. "You know about the chances. What would you say?"

He grinned. "Oh, it's me who would go ahead, too," he said. "An' let the flume bust if it must, ma'am, but —"

Eleanor laid the revolver on the table and leaned toward him. "You and I are alike, then," said she. "You stand by me and I'll take the chance with you. You set the — what did you call them? — the day gang, to binding those flume posts together with wire cable. And get the concrete in! How about that, Mr. Hennessey? Will you have a woman shame you?"

Hennessey looked up at her, reddening as he looked. He made a motion with his thumb toward the poundings on the closet door.

She looked at him a moment, then dropped the revolver back into the drawer.

"They say the men are afraid of you, Mr. Hennessey," she said. "Truly that is laughable. If you are afraid of the river, afraid of the flume, go in there and unlock the closet. Mr. Rumsey is there. You'll get new orders from him. Don't be afraid of me. I've put the revolver away."

The foreman winced. "Wait a bit, miss," he said quickly. "Yer prisoner there would have me fired when it would be done the way ye want it."

"Fired?" repeated Eleanor. "Is that all you work for — to keep a job? Or are you fighting with the river and doing things? Which? We're taking chances together. What would I say to my husband if I had

ruined his largest undertaking? And I am only a woman. You quitter! You yellow bully!"

"Stop!" bellowed Hennessey. "I'm wid ye!"

He went to the telephone on the desk — the telephone that connected with the barracks and the construction sheds. His clumsy fingers fumbled with the switch. "Carson," he called into the mouthpiece, "Carson, keep them pumps workin'. We have new orders. It makes no difference. Ye hear what I say! Put the fresh men on the flume with cables and warp them timber tops across the width of it. Tell Brown to keep them mixers at all they can do. I'll have every man in camp out in twenty minutes."

Clang! He had thrust the receiver in place. Then he turned toward Eleanor. "Did I hear somebody holler 'Let me out! Let me out!'" he asked with a wink.

"I think not," she said.

"Ye are a good sport," he cried. "An' will ye have one more nip?" He was swaying again on his long legs.

"Let's wait till — the rain stops," said she, calmly. "You and I."

"Give us yer hand on it, miss. By God, ain't it small and white!"

With a look over his shoulder, he opened the door. A blast of warm wind again blew the papers about the desk; the rain still beat its wild tattoo on the waterproof paper of the outer walls.

Eleanor dropped her trembling frame into a wooden

arm-chair. "Oh, please send the cold! Please send the cold — the cold clear sky. Oh, please send it!" she cried with her hands pressed together in her lap.

The room was hot, the clock on the wall ticked monotonously; occasionally a sound of movement came from the closet. Time dragged on with intolerable sloth. She was tempted again and again in the course of two hours to call up the foreman's shack in the pit, or, regardless of her inadequate protection from the elements, to run through the dark to the river bank.

Once she went back to her chamber to gaze out at the lights in the great black scar of the river-bed, at the white-foaming toss of waters on the three sides of it, and to listen to the angry roar of the swollen waters.

Daylight came slowly. The rain was still beating down. She could hear the gurgle of it under the eaves. She had sat listening to it for a long while.

The idea of dressing herself had not occurred to her. The fire in the stove had burned low. She felt empty, faint, cold.

"Cold!" she exclaimed and went to fling open the door.

A dash of icy wind fell full upon her bare throat! The scattering rain that fell was turning to ice on the ground! Across the eastern sky above the top of Mannix Butte the sky was streaked with pink across the somber clouds and between their edges stared the blue of heaven!

Eleanor gave a cry of joy. The roar of water in the flume, the rumble of the mixers, the creak of derricks, the puffing of the dump trains was music!

She was dizzy, weak, and victorious! Steadying herself with one hand against the wall, she went to the desk and, sitting, let her head and shoulders fall into the mass of papers. Weariness overcame her before she could even offer resistance. And there, as she slept, the golden strands of her hair spread out upon a blue-print.

She was in the same position when her husband found her. He had come back through the night behind a sheep-man's mule team, doubtless cursing and praying on the way. Arriving on the far bank of the Red Rope he had looked in awed silence at his "work," thanking his Maker that after the onslaught of the river it remained, unchanged and unscathed. Hennessey had stood beside him, a crushed finger hidden under his coat, and had talked volubly, telling him that the river was already subsiding.

Now John put his arms about his wife's limp shoulders. He called her name. He spoke in low tones, when she had moved, telling her that he knew all the story of the night.

Without opening her eyes she turned to put her arms about his neck.

"Oh, John," said she. "Mr. Rumsey is still in the closet, and I am so miserable. Not on his account. But I've been so — tough!"

CIVILIZED

In the back room of an aged and dingy mountaineer's shack which squatted in the shadow of a pine-clad foothill of the Cumberlands were two old and white-haired women. Each was distinguished in her own appearance; between the two, however, there were sharp contrasts. Mrs. Newcomb, the stranger from New York, trained in a highly civilized society, was quite unlike Mrs. Frazer, the old bedridden paralytic, whose education had been derived from the Kentucky wilderness and the monotony of day to day existence.

The presence of Mrs. Newcomb's refined and gentle countenance in the Frazer cabin was accounted for by a calamity which had involved both her own son and the last male member of the Frazer family — the youngest son of the old woman who lay by the window on a sagging corn-husk bed. Young Newcomb had come into this region to survey timber for a Northern corporation. His guide had been young Frazer. Purcell Bailey, of bad repute and descended of a long line of enemies of the Frazers, had attacked the Frazer boy in a row at the deserted lumber camp. Newcomb had interfered in the course of the shooting, and now lay thirty miles up the river, at Guinea Pig Gap, with a bullet in his thigh and an ugly furrow under one eye. Mrs.

Newcomb had come from the railroad as far as the Frazer cabin on a mule wagon; she had stopped for the night because it was a full day's uphill ride to Guinea Pig and because she felt a certain bond of sympathy with the other mother. In the front part of the cabin, behind a closed door which had been draped with black cheesecloth by Kate Frazer before she had gone down to town to make funeral arrangements, lay the body of the last of the Frazers.

It was past midday. The silence and heat of the August afternoon became more and more noticeable to Mrs. Newcomb, who, sitting in a broken rush-bottomed chair, gazed out the window at the wide sweep of sunlit grassy slope that led down to the yellow river, and vainly endeavored to think of a means by which she could offer sympathy to her stolid companion, whose firmly set countenance above the pillow and gnarled inflexible body beneath the sheet served only to suggest brave, uncomplaining suffering.

Mrs. Newcomb had the peculiar balance of temperament that comes after years of proper conscientious widowhood. More than the average share of wealth, contact with the refining influences, with mannerly persons and distinguished society, had come within her experience. Restraint, unselfishness, and gentility had made her calm and altogether happy. Without snobbery, she never lost the consciousness of being a Newcomb or the satisfaction of knowing that the

Newcombs had been for many generations proud and Christian gentlefolk. And yet, on the other hand, the old lady on the bed suffused a self-satisfaction too strong not to have a mighty strength of character behind it. She was a powerful old personality in the very fact of her forbidding stolidity. Mrs. Newcomb felt that words deemed useful and graceful in her own urban environment would here, amid the Kentucky pines and beneath the eagle that soared above the rugged cliff on the river's far shore, seem inconsequent and petty.

Occasionally a large fly circled the room with vehement obtrusive buzz, putting into lesser commotion the horde of smaller species that rested on the whitewashed walls, or crawled over the limp bed-sheet, or across the crooked, dry, brown, wizened, desperate hands of the laconic old invalid, or disappeared suddenly into invisible flight.

Mrs. Frazer was thinking hard, staring with her clear, blue, youthful eyes at the ceiling. The woman from New York marvelled at these wonderful ever new eyes that were set in a face cross-notched with wrinkles and as old as old parchment.

"I believe in the ways of the Almighty," said the native woman finally turning her head. When she spoke, her thin colorless lips met tightly with the suggestion of firm will, so often expressed in the lower faces of toothless old women. "There ain't no reason of speakin' of your son. He was shot up. Thet's com-

mon enough. Ma'am, my boy's a-lyin' dead in yonder room, and hit war by the hand of Purcell Bailey. Hit war the Almighty's will. Er ef Bailey interfered with His will, he's obleeged to suffer for hit." She drew the sheet taut and sighed her conviction in this truth.

"How'd you happin to know on it?" she asked stridently. "Who took word to you as how your boy Ed was shot?"

"By telegraph," replied Mrs. Newcomb, softly. "You know, a message sent from Wade Station arrives in New York almost —"

Mrs. Frazer held up her hand. "I can't understand them things," she interrupted brusquely. "Hit's the Lord's will. Purcell Bailey'll be punished some way same as his father was punished. Bud war the last of my boys." With a gaunt thumb she pointed toward the other wall, staring as if, with her keen and tearless blue eyes, she could see beyond it. "I'll pray for punishment to come to the Bailey boy. He was always a bad boy. I remember back in '84 —" She paused. "Yes'm, he war bad to shoot down my son. I'll pray agin' him."

Mrs. Newcomb was shocked by the calm hate of this venerable old native, but her habit of gentle restraint forbade her the impulse to protest at this uncivilized spirit.

"It's a wonder to me that almost no effort is made to capture this man—this murderer," she ventured to say.

"He's a friend of the sheriff," replied Mrs. Frazer, as if explaining to some child. "The law won't never punish him. Nothin' will hurt him thataway."

"Then how will he be punished?"

"I don't know," answered the old paralytic, irritably. "Hit ought to be done. But they ain't no menfolks left to we-uns now." A real sadness came into her harsh voice; then suddenly her face lightened. "Your boy!" she cried out exultingly. "He was a good friend to my Bud that's dead. Ef he did what he oughter, he'd get Purcell Bailey by and by."

"Kill a man!" whispered Mrs. Newcomb. "Kill a man because he'd killed a friend!"

The other woman narrowed her scrutiny. "There's your own boy, too," she added. "The doctor stopped by and says—you knowed it already—an' says there'll be one eye lost, and the other bullet ain't out of his leg. That's your own son, ma'am." She shut her old parchment hands. "Ef he was mine, he'd have it even with the man as shot him."

Mrs. Newcomb shifted nervously in her chair. The ticking of the nickel-plated clock on the unpainted shelves seemed suddenly to thrust its little clamor on the quiet of the summer afternoon. Tears came into her eyes. The imagined picture of her son, whom she would see on the morrow — the injured, disfigured boy suffering at the Guinea Pig lumber camp — made havoc of her usual composure. Strange influences seemed to

issue from the silent, rugged hills. The restraints that surrounded the coming and going of urban days seemed to have suddenly slipped away. Primitive thoughts of a primitive being took possession of her. With difficulty she checked expression of her grief. She felt the beginning of an infection of hate. Her only boy! A score to settle! And to her the voice of the old woman on the corn-husk bed sounded as the voice of an oracle of fate.

"My son would never plan to kill a fellow-creature," she said, leaning forward. "No!" She plucked at the ruffles of her black dress.

"Why not?" persisted the old woman, struggling to prop herself up on her elbow. Mrs. Newcomb started to answer. The emotion had left her features, again her mouth was gentle, again her white forehead was smooth with self-possession. "Why not?" repeated the bedridden woman, harshly. Raised on her elbow, she appeared composed of a series of angles sharper than those of the skeleton within her. "Why not?"

"Because," said Mrs. Newcomb, "he couldn't. He simply could not do it. It would be against his instincts."

"Agin' what?"

"Instincts. His training would prevent him. All the people that he has ever known have thought that nothing could be worse than killing — than murder. All his family have for many, many generations lived without violence. His father, when he was alive, and

I have always taught him it was wrong to hate anybody. So he not only would not do it — he couldn't do it, Mrs. Frazer." She was endeavoring to conceal how much of a shock the suggestion had been. "His instincts — his civilized inheritance — are against it. He could not kill any more than I could kill."

The other old woman swayed forward on her elbow. "Ain't you no sense of justice?" she demanded. "I don't think high of them as can't hate."

"Civilization has taught us not to hate," exclaimed the urban woman, "and not to kill!"

The old paralytic, in a strained, half-sitting posture, stared silently at Mrs. Newcomb for several minutes. "This yere civilizing business ain't no success ef hit takes the backbone out of folks," she finally said. "Maybe your boy don't want to kill a man, but ef he wanted to kill an' didn't have no ginger to do it, I reckon I'd rather have my boy lyin' stretched out in that room yonder than your'n walkin' round on two legs." She dropped back on to her pillow and turned her head toward the window.

Outside, the sunlight still slanted down the clearing of the yellow river with its yellow streaks and yellow curling eddies. Mrs. Newcomb gazed across the room and through the frame of the unscreened opening. With dreamy consciousness of vision she saw a crow on the far bank that stalked along the shore, now and then drinking and tilting its head up gracefully. The silent

August afternoon seemed pulsing with heat waves in time to the monotonous ticking of the nickel-plated clock. She brushed the wet, gray locks behind her ears with her finger-tips. The corn-husk bed whispered and complained at the slight movements of the gaunt, stiffened body that weighted it down. Mrs. Newcomb could see that the invalid was staring up the river beyond the spot where the clearing ended, beyond the feathered pine tree tops, beyond the crags of the highlands to the eastward, and into the vaults of the blue sky. Mrs. Newcomb wished the daughter would return. Then suddenly she was startled by a sharp, rasping intaking of breath.

The woman on the bed had clenched her dry brown hands for a moment, and as she held her breath a new life shone from her gazing eyes. In another second she relaxed with a sigh, cast a searching glance about the room, squinted at Mrs. Newcomb.

"Ma'am," she said, craftily, "I don't know nawthin' my boy Bud was fonder of than his guns. Behind the kitchen table in the corner, ma'am, you kin find his rifle." She sniffled. "I'd like to see it, ma'am!"

Mrs. Newcomb rose. Her movement stirred the flies again. She brushed down her skirt and straightened to the modest height of her slightly corpulent body. The old paralytic cast a swift and covert glance out the window. "Hurry!" she said, as if the word had exploded in her mouth.

Mrs. Newcomb was startled. She turned quickly. A gun! A rifle! Hurry! Suspicion came to her, flashing. She stepped to the left. And now her view widened. Beyond the winding road's furrow through the pines she could see, up the valley, an open stretch of river. On its surface a man in a punt was poling his way down stream.

"Huh!" exclaimed Mrs. Frazer. "I reckon you know now. Hurry, ma'am."

"I can't."

"Can't?" shrieked the old woman, clutching the sheet. "Can't?" she wailed. "Go get that there gun! Yonder's Purcell Bailey!"

"No, no, no!"

The old woman fell to roaring unintelligible words. She reddened with impotent rage; she shook with excitement; she fell to praying. "He killed my boy," she screamed. "He killed my boy. He's goin' down ter the railroad, and we won't see him no more!"

Mrs. Newcomb hid her face in her hands. It was terrible! When she looked up again, she saw that the other old woman had become very white and very calm. In one clawlike hand she held a little pair of scissors. They must have been on the table. She was holding them closed, points downward, above the hollows of her scrawny throat. "You go get that gun er I'll stick 'em in," said Mrs. Frazer, with determination.

The other woman, meeting the steady gaze, trembled.

The room seemed to spin round in torturesome whirls. The blue eyes of the old invalid appeared like the eyes of some creature in a typhoid dream. Mrs. Newcomb with uncertain steps felt her way through the door, into the kitchen, and back again. The black rifle was in her white hand. "Don't do it,— don't fire at anybody, Mrs. Frazer, please," she said, in the manner of a child. But the invalid, throwing the scissors to the floor, snatched the weapon, held it close to her body with a showing of monstrous affection, and with painful, uncouth movements shifted her position so that she was propped up beside the window ledge. "So Bailey's polin' down the crik," she laughed softly. "I wisht I war young again; I ain't very steady."

She fixed her eyes on the turn in the river above the clearing and became garrulous, talking in a low voice to herself. Mrs. Newcomb moved slowly along the wall toward the bed. "Don't," she whimpered. "Don't!"

And now from behind the screen of pines at the river turn the little punt thrust forth its nose, then leaped forward as Bailey, standing in the stern, dug his pole into the mud. A rippling veil of disturbed water spread on either side and behind the craft. The man drew forth the pole, straightened up, and inspected the open shores of the river. His attitude of caution suggested to Mrs. Newcomb the wariness of a wild animal. He looked up in long scrutiny at the shack on the hill; then, rolling a cigarette, with the pole leaning on his

shoulder, he struck a match. He had now no foreboding of danger.

Mrs. Newcomb did not scream. She had looked in at that part of the gun where she knew cartridges must be placed. There was no cartridge there. The old woman could not kill even if she would. Therefore Mrs. Newcomb's trembling did not proceed from the fear that a shot would be fired. On the other hand, as the old paralytic, convulsed with pain by new and straining postures, laid the shining black barrel along the window-sill, Mrs. Newcomb feared only the terrible tragedy involved in the failure of the weapon to do its work. She did not know why she felt this way nor why she was experiencing an aching desire that the voice of the gun should roar forth upon the stillness of the afternoon. This murderer! His calm drifting on the stream! Would the old crooked finger at the trigger never move!

The hammer fell with a hollow click against emptiness. The old woman on the bed fell back, scratching at the sheet with her nails.

"The gun is empty!" cried Mrs. Newcomb. The room went round and round again. Bed, old woman, shelf, walls, table, the chair in which she had been sitting, caroused in dizzy motion. The bright window spaces little by little settled into steadiness of place. Mrs. Newcomb could see the drifting boat, the wisps of cigarette smoke, and the man standing balanced in its

stern. A curious memory of the city came to her, a line of carriages at a tea, a rainy afternoon, the voice of somebody. Whose voice? Sunlight on the river! There was this murderer who had shot her boy! "The gun is empty!" she whispered, plucking at her dress.

"No, hit ain't," coughed the other. "There's ketridges down here — plenty on 'em." Mrs. Frazer pointed feebly at the lower chamber. "Push me up agin," she commanded. "I'm onsteady. Help me up!" And again she was swaying on her wobbling elbows.

"I can't," groaned Mrs. Newcomb. "Don't shoot it! I can't, I can't!"

The cords on the invalid's neck tightened as she reached for the gun. Her untrained fingers struggled with the breech. The man in the punt dipped his pole once more into the stream. This rifle obeyed the will of the old woman with a clatter of its mechanism. A bright brass shell appeared and, as the breech closed, disappeared like a golden fish darting in and out of a black pool. The bony forearms of the invalid went up again. The rifle clipped the silence.

Mrs. Newcomb heard the shot without physical displeasure. On the contrary, it seemed to feed hungry ears. She was watching for something to happen on the river. The surface of the stream remained unruffled the punt still bobbed along. But Bailey had let the pole fall from his hands. Now he slid into the bottom of the

drifting punt, reaching for his own gun. Now he raised himself on one knee, searching the details of the shack.

"I missed him!" exclaimed the old woman. "I ain't never had no experience in shootin'. Watch out! He seen where she come from. Watch out!"

They saw the spit of his weapon, heard the tick of lead on the window frame, and then the yap of the rifle itself.

Mrs. Newcomb could see the man in the boat pull his old felt hat down over his sun-dazed eyes, lower his weapon, and rub his thigh with the palm of his right hand. The punt was drifting slowly down the course of the stream. Soon it would drift out of sight. A little time was left! Her heart sprang forward into a new pace as she saw the other woman struggling with the rifle breech again. To hit him! To see him go over!

"Lend a hand! Help me up again," wailed the invalid.

"I can't," whispered Mrs. Newcomb, reaching with both hands for the support of the wall. "I can't. Don't kill him!"

A second shot from the river ripped almost silently through the foot-board of the bed. It seemed to bring new life to the paralyzed body that lay there. Mrs. Frazer, with pain contorting her face, strained her available muscles to sit up again. The breech of the gun moved forward and back once more, saying, "Yep — surely — yep." Mrs. Newcomb for the first time in her life knew how much one can love a rifle.

The barrel wavered a little, then steadied. The man on the river was vainly reaching for the pole that he had dropped. To kill him! To see him curl up! The gun, in the old invalid hands, wavered again. It spoke viciously!

The shot echoed from the crags on the far shore. Then the August afternoon with its heat and sunlight was still again. A crow screamed in the pines. The man levelled his gun once more. Lead spattered somewhere outside on the walls of the cabin.

The old woman dropped back into her pillow, staring with clear blue eyes at the ceiling. "I can't hit him, ma'am," she whispered, breathing hard. Such a tragedy of impotence Mrs. Newcomb had only known in dreams. Her head seemed floating on the surface of a whirlpool. Now the green pines, the brown clearing, the yellow river, the patches of blue sky, the bit of color at the man's neck, all seemed of one hue. All the world was black and white, beautifully focussed like a clear photographic plate. A wonderful calm had come, a time for deliberate action. To see this murderer spring in the air, and fall backward out of the little punt! To get him!

"I wanted so to get him," whispered the old woman, as if in echo. Again she moved the gun breech. It seemed that all about her the air quivered with her will.

Mrs. Newcomb put out both her own white delicate hands before her, inspecting them as if they were unfa-

miliar. Her face reddened delicately like the blush of an embarrassed maiden. She stood on tiptoes to look out the window again.

Yes, he was still there! The rifle, the rifle!

"You'll miss again!" she cried. "Mrs. Frazer, please! please! Your hands are shaking. Give me the gun! Give me the gun!"

She threw herself forward upon the paralyzed woman. "Give it to me! Give it to me!" she screamed.

"Yes, yes, yes. Kill him!" choked the old woman. "Kill him! Kill him! Kill him!"

For a moment Mrs. Newcomb's eyes came close to the eyes of the other woman. She looked into them, breathing hard like an excited animal.

"Yes," said the other, softly. "Shoot now. Kill him! Rest it on the sill, ma'am. Kill him!"

"Kill him!" repeated Mrs. Newcomb, and threw herself forward across the sagging bed, across the gaunt body of the invalid.

The rifle was as warm as a living thing. It slid out over the window ledge as if by an intelligence of its own. Strong and yet delicate, it seemed a faithful servant to the hands that held it, and Mrs. Newcomb whispered many words to it as it touched her soft cheek and settled into her hands. It confided to her the information, which she had never known before, that the little pin at the end of the barrel must be adjusted in line with the little groove above the lock; it told her over and

over again in an infinitely small space of time that she would not fail. It whispered to her that it would kill!

As she moved the weapon, scenery rolled past the little sight at the end of the barrel, like a slow-moving tape of a miniature panorama. Suddenly the nose of the punt and a bit of yellow river slid into view. Then the man! Looking along the smooth black backbone of the rifle seemed to magnify all things. She now could see Bailey in detail. There was no difficulty about keeping him covered with the sight. He seemed to be immovably chained to this little pin, and now it seemed as if he were the size of an insect and had been stuck to the end of the gun-barrel. Her heart caroused!

He had picked up his pole. For a moment he stood erect. Her finger stole along the graceful curve of the guard till it reached the trigger. She caressed it softly. She pulled it slightly till she felt its first springing resistance. What would happen when he had been hit? He would fall backward, there would be a splash, a struggle in the yellow water, an echo of curses from the crags. Then the August afternoon would be silent again. Then she could hear the flies!

"Kill him, sister," mumbled the old woman.

"I can't! I can't!" wailed Mrs. Newcomb. "I can't kill him. I can't! I ca —"

She saw Bailey dig in his pole. The punt leaped forward on the water's surface and disappeared behind the pines. The gun slipped from her weakening fingers; it

lost its balance and fell, with ignominy, into the bushes below the window. Once Mrs. Newcomb endeavored to sit up. Her body swung above her straining arms a moment, then whirled quickly on to its back, lying crossways above the body of the paralytic.

With new consciousness she realized that the other old woman was beating feebly upon her shoulders with lean, dry, brown, clenched hands. Sometimes she could hear the whine of the flies and sometimes the cracked and tired voice of the old woman.

"You wanted to an' couldn't! Damn ye!" she was screaming at intervals. "You ain't half a woman. You wanted to an' couldn't!"

UNREGENERATE

FROM the high-ledged, indomitable coast back to the northern pines, a half mile inland, a prevailing wind had bent rushes, apple trees, salt grass, rickety outfields of corn, and the buildings of the scattered farms all in one direction: the face of the earth seemed ever on the point of breaking away with a leap, to hurry southward. He who gazed by moonlight at this gnarled landscape, or heard the quick panting and sighing of the dry grass, leaning under the swish of the warm wind of noonday, was possessed of a feeling of unrest, and looked above him with envy at the scurrying clouds, free travelling in the sky. Such a partnership of rocks and writhing vegetation, between the hissing sea and hissing pines, wrought strange shapes from the humanity that dwelt within its influence. Grown men and women surged forward in life, restless but dogged, little by little and by necessity concentrating all energy toward making the reluctant soil of the farms give up its sparse yield; but the children dreamed fitfully along the length of youth.

On this particular August afternoon a rare change of wind having drawn a veil of fog across the warm sea, the sun was driving it shoreward and devouring it, as it shivered against the wet tide-bared rocks. Peter Mull, an old man in a noisy farm wagon, urged a patient gray

horse along the road which sinuously followed the curves of the shore. Then he turned inland toward his farm buildings, following the ruts through the heather and hardtack, and wearily climbed down on to the hen-scratched gravel before the barn door.

He looked toward the weathered house which slept more peacefully now in the August sunlight than ever it slept beneath a winter moon. His face was cross-hatched, like a coarse etching; his nose and ears were large and gleamed out from under bushy brows as bits of glass gleam out from under a tangle of weeds. He seemed to have been cast in a heroic mould but never to have received the fire of greatness which would have prevented him from hardening into a narrow, plodding old man, stubborn, slow-thinking, and ignorant.

Leaving the horse looking down patiently at the hen tracks, he went to the kitchen door and peered within. On a table with a red cover lay an empty plate and a dish of pie covered with a dome-shaped wire screen about which tantalized flies buzzed noisily. To find the kitchen empty seemed to cause him no little consternation.

"I wonder where she is," he said gasping, and then hurried toward the barn calling, "Mary, Mary," in a breaking shout. An answer was returned to his great relief, and presently he found his daughter. With a wisp of straw she was picking struggling flies out of the maze of cobwebs which fluttered in the warm breeze at every

corner of the window behind the row of cattle stanchions.

Perhaps Mary was fifteen years old. Her figure was thin and a little awkward, her mouth rich in color and mobility, her nose was straight and as freckled as a sparrow's egg. Eyes of a deep blue ever opened wide, as if in simple surprise at the most commonplace things of life, and yet seemed two distinct personalities with the experience of many lifetimes. She heard her father's step but did not turn.

"What ails ye, Mary?" said he. Her strange silent dreams, her idling hours, her meditations, always remained to him an unfathomable mystery. "What ails ye settin' loose them flies?"

"They're so unhappy, sir," said she, looking at the floor and then raising her surprised eyes to meet his frown.

"Ye've done the work about the house?" he asked with the troubled consciousness that she had met his reproof with an unconsciously victorious reply, as always.

"Oh, yes, sir."

"So's it is fittin' for company? For I've been to the village. The new travelling preacher was there. I asked him to come to reason with us. He is a good man and makes many follow him out of the darkness into light. He drives by this very afternoon and will come. Do you understand?"

"Oh!" she exclaimed excitedly.

"He will reason with us," said the old man, sternly. "He will reason with you, daughter, and his teaching will be even better than mine. He will save your soul for ye, daughter. He will pluck you out of perdition."

"Yes, sir," said she, with meekness. "As if I was a fly in the cobweb, sir? I should go now to smart up the house, father."

She ran as far as the open door, through which the sunlight fell upon the rough worn floor boards, and then caught at her dress with a gasp.

"Oh," she cried, "he's hitched his horse to the fence and he's comin' now, sir; and dressed all in black and a straw hat with a black ribbon!"

She ran hurriedly toward the house while her father strode forward to meet the visitor.

The latter was a young man with careful movements and long black hair nicely brushed behind his prominent ears. His cuff links rattled as he warmly extended a cold hand to Mr. Mull. He had a nervous cough and the whites of his eyes were tinged with a peculiar china-ware blue: his clean-shaven skin, which ordinarily would have been pale, now glared red with sunburn.

"Ah, brother," said he, "a little rain would do us all a bit of good." He mopped his high narrow forehead with a starched handkerchief. "But we must put our trust in prayer," he added with a sigh. "Even our troubles, brother, will be solved as God deems wise."

"Let us go in out of the sun. I'll tell ye all — fair and right as my mouth will go," answered the old man. "Mary will lead your horse into the barn for less heat and flies."

He led the way to the front entrance, and finding it locked, hurried around to the kitchen. In a minute his trembling fingers rattled the key on the inside; the door opened on screaming hinges painfully unused to the movement. His daughter had drawn up a single curtain in the front room, the air of which entered the nostrils with an irritating powdery smell. In the centre stood a marble-topped table with a fat, smug looking book beside a velvet-framed photograph of Mary's mother. The walls with their discolored paper exhibited only one picture — a green mountain reflected majestically in a blue lake. Fanning, the evangelist, seated himself on a high-backed sofa upholstered in black — a severe figure upon a sombre throne, gazing out under the raised curtain on to the lively expanse of sea beyond the leaning landscape. Peter Mull closed the door and took a lowlier position upon a black walnut chair.

"I've thought about this a long time," said he, in a low stiff voice, "an' I've prayed to see light on it," he nodded toward the back part of the house. "It's about Mary — the girl."

"We are all poor miserable sinners," commented Fanning.

"She ain't a sinner. Not yet," protested the old man. "But it's the wild blood. She gets it from her mother. When I married her I was forty years old and was lumbering, up beyond the border. She were a French-Canadian, a good woman, too, and died and left me with the two children. But good as she was — wife and mother — there was the wild blood the same, waitin' to burst out in them I loved — in all what was left to me."

"Two children?" asked Fanning, casting his eyes about as if to discover the other standing in some gloomy corner.

"The other was a boy," said the old man with effort, "a bit older than this one. A fine-looking lad, too, he was, but not for work or for religion. He were no God-fearing lad. The evil was in him. He were forever lying on his back under the apple tree, yonder — that same apple tree, a' lookin' into the sky and thinking wicked, as we found out later. When he'd get a chance he'd go back into the woods and be gone overnight and more. There weren't no good in him except he loved his sister. He was awful kind to her. They thought a deal of one another."

Peter Mull rubbed his large hardened hands together so that the grating of the calloused skin was clearly audible. He looked up at Fanning with a pained expression and cleared his throat.

"He was a restless boy; there weren't no peace of the

spirit in him. I used to teach him the path of the righteous. I taught him so's he might follow God's ways. I done my duty as I seen it. Then about four years ago, when he'd got along, I could see him planning wild things in his mind — Satan claiming him agin my battle for his soul. Then, sure enough, he went away." The old man's voice shook a little and his eyebrows were drawn down. "And he went amongst them who serve God's enemies — a lost sheep, Mr. Fanning. I heard nothin' of him till he died in the jail house down — There seemed no mercy for me, and I —"

"My poor brother, I am indeed sorry for this," interrupted Fanning, raising one hand aloft. "But if you did your best, it will not be written down against you in heaven."

"That ain't my burden," answered Peter Mull. "The trouble ain't that. But I'm afeered the little girl — my little Mary. She's like her brother; she thinks like he used to think. When I see her lookin' far off with them eyes of hers I know that Satan is drawin' her to him. She's thinkin' of leavin' me. I've been noticin' it sense spring come."

He threw his arms wide apart to express the volume of his dread, the helplessness of his plight.

"What would I do," he groaned, "if the wild blood should be in her? There ain't no more; she is all. And I've strived a lot to make life serious to her. I've done what I could to teach her in the ways of salvation.

We've read the Bible faithful together, and prayed together solemn ever since Bob went away."

"That is wise, that is wise," remarked the other, earnestly. "It is through faith that we poor creatures are kept from being lost."

"But I failed with the boy," the old man cried; "now the girl is all I have." His face was drawn, his body held stiffly upright on the edge of the chair, as if he sought to draw the bend out of his old back. "If she should go, I'd be all alone — all the light gone, sir." His voice, proceeding with a low-seated, rumbling power, suddenly broke. He thrust his big forefinger down his collar. "All alone."

"Perhaps," the other began after a moment, in the manner of one who has weighed a matter well, "you have not made — of course, you have done your best — but you have not made, let us say, the teachings of the gospels real enough. For salvation must be shown as an escape from hell. There must be taught a real hell, brother, ever ready to swallow up into its torments the unrighteous. To escape the burning horrors of which we must —"

"Perhaps I'd better call Mary," interrupted Peter Mull, suddenly. The glib eloquence of the revivalist growing rapidly warmer inspired the old man with the hope that here was truth in all its terror, such as he had never been able to administer. "I'll call her so's she can hear it."

"Yes," admitted Fanning, "it would be well. And," said he, speaking as if to himself and with a bowed head, "may God give me light in this matter."

When Peter Mull returned with his daughter, a new ribbon of pink grained silk adorned her neck in honor of the visitor. She entered the room behind her father; there was an obvious bating of her breath, and her gaze meekly followed the pattern of the carpet. Fanning blew his nose, stood up and assumed a commanding position with his finger tips resting on the fat book that lay across the table top. "Mary, Mary," said he, impressively.

"Yes, sir," said the girl, raising her surprised blue eyes.

"Sit down yonder. You are in grave danger, daughter," he went on, folding his cold hands; "evil besets you from every side. And I am going to tell you what you must do to be saved from hell fire." He brought the last word out with a terrifying elocutionary shout.

"Oh!" exclaimed the girl.

"Have you heard of the seven torments of the abode of evil? Do you want to be saved? Or, do you want to be lost forever and forever in the fire; or, suffering tortures beyond belief descend far down to work out thy atonement with pain and seething flames? Or, do you want to live in this vale of tears according to God's law and His commandments, so that when you are recalled to His throne you shall dwell in peace eternal?"

"Oh, sir," said Mary, "I wish to do the good God's will." She turned appealingly toward her father, who had taught her the phrase.

"Ah, Mary child," cried Fanning, "the flesh is weak! Days come when we long for worldly things, when we long to leave our loved ones and go away from the beautiful country into the wicked cities where there are snares for the innocent. Satan has set this trap for us. And if we yield to the temptation, we are lost; evil claims us for its own, misfortunes oppress us, men revile us, and we are doomed to pass from this world down into perdition."

Her blue eyes filled with tears, which rolled down her freckled cheeks and dropped audibly upon the stiff pink silk bow under her chin.

Seldom had Fanning won his quarry so easily. He looked with satisfaction from the girl, shaking with sobs, to the old father, who sat with compressed lips grasping the chair arms. "No wonder you cry, poor child," said he, in a more kindly tone. "Take heart. It is not too late to save your soul."

"Oh, sir, it ain't me," said she; "I were not thinking of me. It were brother Bob."

"Bob!" exclaimed Fanning, and then he suddenly remembered the history of the black sheep, whose life-story he had unconsciously set forth.

"Bob, in hell," said the girl, as if to make plain who she meant. Her slight shoulders were convulsed with

her grief. "He is suffering! Oh, sir, I never thought of that before. I did not know it was true."

Peter Mull pulled himself forward, as if he were about to rise, and remained painfully motionless. The revivalist drew a long breath. Fear and consternation were written on his sunburnt face. The old man solved his perplexity. "I'm afeered it's true," he muttered, picking at the buttons on his coat. "I'm afeered it's true."

"And so, Mary," cried Fanning, seizing on the relief without a trace of mercy for the grief that he had caused her, "you must be ever watchful for the temptations and the pitfalls. You must not let Satan claim your soul. You must make yourself a home above. That is what you must do, isn't it? Do you want to go to hell?"

"Yes, sir," said Mary, promptly.

Fanning and her father both gasped.

"You didn't understand," said the former, almost timidly.

"Yes, sir, I did understand," she said. "I want to go there. For brother Bob is there, sir. He is unhappy and in pain. He's burning. I could talk to him, sir, like we used to do, and smooth his head like the time he fell from the roof."

"But Mary, child," coaxed the preacher, desperately, "your mother is in heaven and God will take your father there. You will want to be with them, too."

"They don't need any one, sir. Everybody has peace eternal there. You said so, sir. Father has taught me

that, too. But brother Bob, in hell, will need me. He will be lonesome, and sick, and hurt," she nodded her head conclusively, "I must go to hell, sir."

Peter Mull, in his distress, rose up and paced the little room with great strides, back and forth, like a creature caught in a spacious trap; Fanning sat down, looking into the startled round eyes of the young girl as if his gaze was held there by a higher mental power than his own. When he spoke his voice was stripped of all its professional tone: —

"You would go there; you would suffer fire and torment, burning and pain forever?"

"Yes, sir," she answered simply: "for brother Bob; I loved him, sir."

The old man stopped short before the open window, leaning forward, as if with an impulse of affection, toward his daughter, who stood with brimming eyes, plucking at her own slim fingers. Thereafter, for several seconds no one stirred, and the voice of a glad song sparrow singing in the sunshiny heather was the only sound. Finally Fanning, sitting on the edge of the sofa, began to rub his broadcloth knees with the palms of his hands, and at last, with an effort, he tore asunder the bond which seemed to hold his eyes to hers. The drawing of a deep breath suggested the warming of his own personality to life again; bending forward he rested his forehead in the crotch of his forefinger and thumb, meditating.

"Misguided child," he addressed her after a moment, and with a reproachful, solemn voice; "you must not cry out against the infinite wisdom of your Maker. He who arranges all things plants in the hearts of those who do His will a desire to save their souls from perdition. And now you know you have transgressed His will and must pray on your knees for forgiveness."

He ventured to look at her. She was still standing on the same spot, every graceful droop of her slender body suggesting meekness, patience, and resignation. The pink bow drooped, too, wet with her tears. He gathered his strength, thrust one accusing arm sharply forward, and began in a deep, hollow voice:

"Wicked girl! —"

Peter Mull had strode quickly across the room to Fanning's side, and now he laid a giant hand upon the thin shoulder of the preacher. "Stop!" commanded the old man, closing his heavy fingers upon the collar-bone beneath. "It ain't true! It ain't true the girl is wicked! Don't say no more. God ain't given us the light we prayed for."

Fanning wriggled up, primly adjusting his coat. He also picked up his straw hat from the floor and inspected it carefully. The old man turned to the window and the leaning landscape, now shadowed by thunder clouds for which the preacher had expressed a hope.

"Brother," said Fanning, humbly, "maybe you are

right. And maybe you have more light," he added, a little ironically, "than I. Good-by, Mary."

The old man followed him out and helped him get his horse and buggy into the driveway. Neither spoke. The old man rubbed the horse's nose once as he passed in front of its head. The animal, scenting the storm, whinnied nervously.

"We may have some rain," said the preacher, looking about in the billowed dome of the sky. Sea-birds rose and fell above the faraway cliffs, screaming.

"Yes, that's so," said the old man, speaking with sudden realization. He looked toward the pines, over which the black clouds were smoking upward with the drive of the wind. "You'd better stay on until it blows over."

The other, with his gloved hands on the reins, seemed undecided for a moment; then he saw the figure of the girl standing outside the kitchen door, her dress switching back and forth in the gusts of air. "No," said he, wiping his sunburnt face, "I'll be going. Good-by, brother."

Peter Mull opened his mouth as if to say something, yet no intelligible words were framed by his lips. The visitor clicked his horse forward; the buggy swayed off toward the cliff road through the sedges and heather. Raindrops began to splash up little craters of dust on the hen-scratched gravel. Still the old man stood alternately watching first the diminishing vehicle and then

the ponderous writhing of the sky. Finally he turned toward his daughter, standing in the kitchen doorway.

"I'm going back yonder into the scrub oaks after the black yearlin'," said he. "You'll get supper by the time I'm back." She nodded.

He changed his coat in the barn and hurried out. Mary watched his tall, bent figure swaying forward through the brush into the oncoming storm. Every now and then he would stop to stand on a rise of ground outlined against the leaden sky, motionless, for a moment, and looking at the ground, as one who, going forth to wrestle with an angel, meditates the coming stress. At last the thickening rain, slanting crosswise to the lean of the apple trees, walled him off from sight. Mary, with her face full of wonderment and awe, closed the door of the kitchen and thrust her twitching fingers into a pan of unshelled peas.

The storm came, fumed about the house with threatening flashes, crashes and grumbling resonance, and then hastened across the sea, followed by an army of sunlight which turned the tossing water from opaque black to transparent green once more. The sky was bluer than for days, and apparently receded into sparkling, infinite distance. The girl, turning from the stove on which rocked two saucepans, rattling their tin covers merrily, opened the window and leaned over its sill so that the clean cool air outside might fan her fire-reddened cheeks and burning eyes.

Every flurry of air shook down from the line of apple trees a diminutive shower of noisy drops; the wings of the sea-birds above the cliffs flicked white as they flew.

Mary went back to her work of setting the kitchen table for the evening meal; she had just finished placing her father's knife and fork beside his plate, when, upon looking up, she perceived him standing, framed in the doorway. A new expression was drawn upon his wrinkled face, terrifying only because it indicated no certain emotion. It was the result of a complex revolution within, but the girl did not try to analyze it. To her it was merely the awful newness that might impress one who had lived for a lifetime below a sturdy mountain and had looked up to see that its shape had suddenly changed. Her lips parted with her wonder.

The old man stood with one hand grasping the door jamb. "Put the supper on, daughter," said he, softly, in a voice also terrifying because it was so new.

"Yes, sir," said Mary. She nearly let a dish fall from her fingers as she worked.

"Come here, Mary," her father said, when she had finished. He reached out awkwardly to take her little hand in his great paw and draw her gently outside. "Look yonder," said he, waving a long arm toward the sunset behind the black pines. "Ain't that purty?"

She looked toward it with dreamy, speculative eyes. Together they gazed in hushed reverence.

At last the old man spoke. "I've prayed for light," said he, thickly, "and God has been good to me. Out yonder in the scrub oak come a revelation, Mary, and shown to me how wrong I'd been. I've been selfish — wicked and selfish — to want you to stay. I see now I ain't been afeered you'd go away and sin, daughter. No, it ain't that. It weren't nothin' but bein' afeered you'd go and leave me alone. I've been a thinkin' of myself," he stumbled over his words, "I've been a thinkin' of myself."

"Oh, sir," exclaimed the girl, plucking at his sleeve.

"And God made it plain to me that the spirit has moved you and so I must let you go away. I've got faith that He will watch over you, daughter. You are all I've got but I ain't a goin' to be selfish any more. I'm goin' to let you go."

The girl gave a little frightened gasp and clutched his arm as in the manner of a child who appeals for protection in the presence of danger. Her father had drawn himself up to his full height; his chin was lifted, his nostrils sniffing the air defiantly, like one who challenges an unrighteous foe.

"Oh, sir," cried Mary. "Must I go away? Ain't there any other way I can go to Bob in hell?"

Her father seemed only to hear the last words and he struck out with his fist into the air. "Bob ain't in hell," he shouted. Supreme faith in this truth rang forth in his voice.

"Thank God, sir," sighed the girl, burying her face in the curve of her father's elbow.

"It's me who must be saved," said the old man. "I won't be selfish no more. I've seen ye dreamin' of going out yonder," he swept his arm across the darkening horizon, and his voice shook. "You can go away when you're ready, Mary." He stepped from her and seated himself on the doorstep, looking at the ground.

"Oh, father, I ain't never wanted to go away," she cried running to him. "I've wanted to stay with you."

The old man looked up at her incredulously and met the surprised round eyes.

"Always," she said.

He dropped his head, gulped, and then, reaching up, caught her hands and drew her slight figure down into his great arms. "There, there," said he, soothingly, "it has came out all right after all."

For many minutes they sat there, she wriggling closer to his damp coat and he with his old face pressed against her hair.

"Oh, sir, we don't do this often," she said. "I like to have your arms about me, sir. I think I like it more than anything else, sir."

AMONG THE NAMELESS

THE long perspective of street that ran down toward the Minneapolis railroad yard was gray with late afternoon rain, falling slantwise, and wind-driven, as if it meant to continue its cold bombardment till doomsday. Like all streets that run by a Union Depot, it was lined with cheap brick blocks with pawnshops, moving-picture theatres and saloons below, and tenements and thirty-five-cent hotels on the second stories. The doors of such hotels are, of course, squeezed in between the disorderly shop fronts. From one of these exits, which fate and the fire regulations has decreed should open outward, suddenly, there was projected a young man. He struck the sidewalk on his shoulder.

An older person, with thin legs about which creaseless trousers flapped, who already had made a more dignified exit, helped the younger man to his feet, and then talked viciously, out of the corner of his unshaven mouth, to an individual within, who had furnished the motive force for the younger man's flight. It was evident that the two outside were embittered against the one behind the half-opened door. Even though each cast a respectful glance at the thick-fingered muscular hand, which was the only part of their enemy visible, they did not

hesitate to revile him. The wealth and peculiarity of their diction indicated plainly enough that they were not at home in the West, but unquestionably had their natural haunts along the river-front of Eastern Manhattan, far away.

When they had exhausted their vituperations the door opened a little wider. Both stepped backward, preparing for flight. But the keeper of their hostelry merely stuck his face, with its bulging Swedish cheekbones and forehead, out into the wet and cast up and down the street the placid, bored look of one who is always successful in handling tough customers. It seemed as if he intended to overlook their presence completely, so they both stepped back two more steps as he began his final say:

"Whan a fallar tries to tak' cigarettes from de case whan I ben from the desk makin' up de beds, then it is too much."

The door closed upon this simple explanation, and slinking under the wet, flapping awning over a labor employment agency, the two outcasts gloomily regarded the deserted, shining cobblestone and red-brick scenery before them.

"I wish I'd have given him a clout on the jaw," said the younger one with that cool indifference which may be acquired after many experiences of violence.

"We could have mopped him proper, but where would we get off with these cops out here?" growled

the other, jamming his hat over his thin gray hair. "You can't call these cops Bill or Tony or Mike. You're not even in Brooklyn, Ed."

Ed was still young and healthy enough to have retained a clear skin and attractive, half-wild and half-sentimental brown eyes. He lifted one foot and then the other as if to compare the noises the water made in each leaky shoe.

"Orinoco, old scout," said he, "when I piped meself off six months ago, sittin' up nights in a box car watching a horse that Cuppenheimer promised us would clean up a scream with two appearances on an outlaw track, I know my grandmother ought to have flown the coop at the age of three. If you ever see me leavin' the Big Village again without a guardian, get me a habeas corpus."

"You ain't back there yet, and the regular stunts won't work here. It looks as if we'd got to find a common job — the first I've done since I steered a night hack on Sixth." Orinoco referred to his past with a reflective examination of his cuffs, which had been turned in the last two weeks as often as one edge gathered a new comparative advantage over the other.

Ed had looked around to study one of the brightly colored placards hung by strings to rusty tacks, driven here and there on the front of the Labor Agency. "Railroad Work, Omaha, two dollars. Free transportation," announced a yellow sign. He touched the word

"free," as if it were especially important. "Spring work on stock farm, six men. $30 and found," said the pink one.

"I wonder how happy a feller'd be," he said as if to himself.

"Where's the excitement?" asked Orinoco, who enjoyed the sport of rascality. He had even had much amusement by taking good money away from bad canal boatmen down from Erie, who had been paid off at the New York end of their trips. "You've got a case of the down and out. I've had 'em. I can't count the number of times I've had 'em, kid."

Ed looked up at the other with quickened affection. Fate had set them down for the time being as a pair at the game of life. "It would be fierce to be alone!" he exclaimed.

"That ain't all," the older man went on, lowering his voice. "I believe I know a trick — a swell trick." He scrutinized the other as if he were inspecting one of the ponies at Sheepshead.

"Enough to buy two real, long-green, yellow-backed passes to New York with liability for baggage limited to one hundred dollars?" inquired Ed with some scepticism.

"And then some," added Orinoco.

"Bring on your rat."

Orinoco caught his young friend by the arm. He led him out into the driving rain, still looking at him

with his beady eyes narrowed. "Ed," said he, confidentially, "you're not yet thirty an' I'm halfway around the track. You're a handsome brute an' I've got the complexion of a dill pickle and the shape of a summer squash. You'll play this square with me?"

"Yes, what is it?"

"Love," answered Orinoco, solemnly.

"What the —" Ed gasped.

They had stopped before a restaurant decorated externally with white paint and with a sample roasted turkey displayed in the window. On the glass in white porcelain were the words: "Open all night," and within glared a dusty cloth sign upon which was printed, "Try our coffee. Best yet."

"That's to the bad — that coffee," commented the older man sadly. "I ate here them days when you was in St. Paul." He took a bit of newspaper from his pocket, unrolled a half-smoked cigar from it, and struck a match.

"Well, come on!" exclaimed the boy, with his desire for tobacco irritated by the whiff of smoke. "What's doing?"

Orinoco smiled, self-satisfaction riding his irregular features. He first contemplated his companion and then a girl who had come forward within the restaurant and was arranging the toothpicks on the cash-register desk.

This girl was not young; perhaps thirty. She was

large and angular in face and figure. Her hair was severely straight, and the hands which went about their task were oversized and muscular. If she had any personal charms they lay in the grace and litheness with which her movements were made, and also, perhaps, in the alertness of her gray eyes.

"There she is," said Orinoco.

Ed looked puzzled. "Happy day!" he exclaimed without gallantry. "She's a quince!"

"But her money's good," Orinoco whined. "She came off a ranch in Montana. Works from twelve at noon to midnight. Done it four years. Saved her money. I talked to her like a daddy. Yearns to have a mate. Wise most always, but sentimental an' trustin' by nature. Got a house an' lot on the river-front and four hundred in the bank. Let her keep the house an' lot, kid. Divide fair with her. Her name's Maudie."

"What's that to me?" Ed asked gloomily.

"Oh, you're goin' to marry *her*," Orinoco announced.

Ed glanced up quickly and started to walk on. "Not for mine, with that face!" he said.

"Cut it out," the older man growled, holding his convex chest, while he conquered a fit of coughing. "Come back here. You don't have to go the limit. There won't be nothin' to do but make her crazy about yer and she'll let you have her money to play with. You have a way with women, kid. Look at the way Edie De Vere acted, an' the rest of 'em."

"I wore classy suits in them days," Ed objected with a cheerless grin.

"It don't make any difference. They always do. You can make a kill whenever you want if you take a few days to it. You know it." He watched the vanity of the other rise and followed his advantage.

"It will get us back to the Holy City," he urged.

Ed scuffled to the restaurant window again. She was inside still building the mountain of toothpicks. "It's a dirty trick," said he. His left hand slid out of his trousers' pocket and he glanced down at his total silver wealth lying in his palm.

"But leave me, little one," he whispered to Orinoco. "I'm going in to see Maudie. I'll meet you in the Union Depot later an' tell you what I drew." His hand was at the door, his head turned back over his shoulder toward his retreating companion. "I wouldn't do this for anybody else," he called flippantly. Then he entered the lunch room.

Without glancing up he knew that no other patrons were present and he slouched his way toward one of the tables. The idle cook who sat there arose, stretched, and disappeared through a swinging door, which bore upon its middle panel the record of a million pushes. Ed sat down beside his wet hat, studying the bill of fare. The girl sighed, adjusted her apron, and came to stand patiently at his elbow. Suddenly he glanced up, then allowed the look of surprised interest to come into his

face — the look with which the wise know a woman is well complimented.

"Hello," said he, after a moment. "Where'd you come from?"

She smiled down at him good-naturedly. "You ain't got anything on me, stranger," she answered. "Where did you come from?" They stared each other out of countenance.

"Milk an' apple pie," said Ed. "An' come back here and sit down. I want to talk to *you*."

"We ain't let to sit down with guests," she explained as she took a seat opposite and pushed the pie across the coarse cloth.

"I'm no guest," Ed returned easily, "I'm a suffragette."

"You're an awful jollier."

"Somebody put you wise," he said.

"I don't like you to be silly. I ain't silly. Most girls like to flirt an' carry on. I don't. I suppose I ought to. But I don't. I like to laugh at anything real funny."

"What do you call good comedy?" he asked.

"Did you ever see a tenderfoot on a buckin' horse?" she returned. "That's funny. But it makes me homesick to think of those things. I come from Montana. This city life is just too tiresome, and everything is stuffy. I've lost lots of flesh. I like places where you can see a long ways around, and the air is better. I've

got a little place myself. It's rented out. I reckon you ain't interested. I don't see what makes me talk so." She put her weight forward on her hands as if about to rise.

"Whoa," exclaimed Ed suddenly. "Don't go off, I'm lonesome."

She was pleased; it showed in her honest smile. "How's the pie?" she asked.

"To the mustard!"

"You ought to wear an overcoat in this rain," she told him, with her hand feeling of his wet sleeve.

Ed saw the advantage open to him. "What do you care? Nobody does," he said gloomily.

"Why, how you talk!" she exclaimed. A sudden look of doubt came into her face. "Haven't you got any folks?"

Ed dropped his fork. He hadn't heard the word "folks" from the day he went to New York for the first time. He remembered the trip to the Home the day of his married sister's funeral. His stomach had been sore with foolish drinking in another boy's room. Cigarettes on the smoking-car had not tasted good. His sister had been the last. Tears had come into his eyes — the last, too. He remembered them now.

"Nix," said he, forgetting the game for a minute. "I haven't got any."

"Been married?" She cast a careless glance at the pressed-metal ceiling.

"Not guilty."

"Men pick out funny women," she philosophized, with her big hands clasped before her on the table. "Aren't you going to drink your milk? As I was sayin', I don't know. Everything is a pretty face, a couple of ruffles and hair puffs and a ten-dollar hat with men. If I was a man I'd find a girl who didn't let her mother do the dishes. A girl who'd have sense. Playin' the pianner and goin' to movin'-picture shows and dances ain't everything. If I was a man I'd want some one who'd take care of me if I was tired or sick and knew how to save money. A man an' a woman ought to be like partners. A woman has to give up most, but if I was a man I'd want one who'd be willing to do it — somebody who'd plant geraniums in the front yard an' be there every night when he came home."

"Suppose I didn't come home every night?" suggested Ed, drawing imaginary pictures on the tablecloth with his forefinger.

"I don't believe I could scarcely stand it," said she.

"*You* stand it?" asked Ed. "How did you get into this?"

She blushed awkwardly, putting her hair back around her ears. "Oh, I didn't mean *me* in particular," she stammered. "But I don't see how a man could find the heart not to come home."

"You mean if the woman was square an' all that," said he quickly. "Gee no! Most of them I know —

Say, I suppose a man would just have to play on the level with her. He might want to, what?"

She had been studying his expression as he talked. "Where you from?" she asked.

"New York," he said. "I meant to tell you." Now he saw his chance! His face was enlivened for a second with his first purpose. But when he started forward on his story, somehow there was none of the vivacity with which he usually could tell his lies.

"Do you know, I'm broke," he said. "Dead broke and I ain't used to it. My father owned a big cotton mill and a silver mine. What do you know about that!"

"Money ain't everything," she said.

He looked up with genuine surprise, and hesitated for a moment. "Oh, well," he went on, "If I could only get together just a little bit of it now — three or four hundred dollars — I'd send it to my patent attorneys at Washington by telegraph. I've got an improvement on a slot machine that I've been offered eighteen thousand dollars for, if I can only buy up the right to another machine. I've got an option on it good till a week from next Monday. A man named Charlie Wilkinson owns it. But there's no use." He sank his head into his uplifted palms. "There's no use."

"I wish I could help you," said the girl. "I wished I dared —"

He was far too shrewd to let her say more. He jumped up as if suddenly filled with repulsion. "You!"

he exclaimed. "Do I look like a feller who'd take a helpless woman's money, even for the one best bet? Not me! But I'm just as much obliged, girlie."

She had thrust one foot from beneath her black skirt and was looking down at it reflectively.

"I'm tired of life," he said, standing above her. He had started the sentence for the impression it would make upon her; the motive vanished into a sincere ending. "And," said he, "everybody is crooked! Someway."

"Oh, don't say that," she cried. "I ain't got many friends. I was the oldest one in my family, an' I was always saving my money to buy Bob or Nettie or Minnie a present or something they wanted. They didn't give me none. They all went East, and they don't even write to *me*. Some people is like me. Nobody even thinks of 'em! Lots of men has talked to me nice. But I reckon I know! I don't care! Most everybody is straight and means well. You see if they don't!"

Ed cast a quick glance behind him at the gray square of front window. Toward her shoulder he reached out an agile hand and tried to draw her close enough to him to kiss her. "Don't," she cried. "Don't," and drew back. He felt the struggle of her big-boned body as it pulled away from him.

"Say!" he exclaimed, pointing a forefinger at her. "I like you. I'm coming to feed in this joint, girlie."

She watched him silently as he went out the door and even walked to the front of the café to press her reddened face against the cold glass. Halfway across the puddled street he turned around. Seeing her standing there he waved his hand. He had called her "Girlie!"

Even he, walking into the station, remembered that he had used the term. "Sis" and "Kid" were natural to his vocabulary of the semi-affections. "Girlie" had till now an untouched bloom upon it. And now there was Orinoco, with no freshness about him anywhere, half asleep on the settee! Ed assumed a sullen attitude before he touched his shoulder.

"Hello, boy," said the older man, cheerfully awakening. "How did you come out with the old lemon, eh?"

"Oh, good," replied Ed. "It was all I could do to prevent gettin' my ears an' nose full of money."

"You weren't fool enough to rush the job?"

"Not me. To Jersey with the proposition, anyhow!"

Orinoco looked at him reproachfully. "You promised to play square Ed," he whined. "You said you'd do it or I'd have tried some other way myself. I told you you'd have to promise her to marry her. But you don't have to go that far. What are you afraid of?"

"She might not want me, old man," said Ed, thrusting his hands into his trouser pockets. "What do you think?"

"Aw, make good — make good, kid! Aren't you going back there?"

Ed nodded. "Sure am," he growled. "Let's go an' get another room. I've got to wait anyway till supper's over before I can see her."

When he came back that night it was after twelve. The pair of men had become guests of "The Dewey," a second-story hotel, across the street from their former hostelry. Ed now climbed the squeaky stairs that led from under the illuminated sign to the narrow corridor above. He found Orinoco sitting on his cot under the fitful kerosene light, carefully fitting a piece of cardboard into one of his shoes to cover a hole.

"Still raining?" asked the worker curling his toes and looking up.

"No," said Ed. "It's stopped. The moon's out."

"How's Maudie?"

"Her name ain't Maudie. Your dope is bad. It's Carrie."

"That's so! I forgot. What difference does it make?"

"Don't make none — to me," replied the young man. He threw himself down on the sagging couch spring. "I wish I was dead!" he announced.

Orinoco stopped short his whittling of the edge of the cardboard; he looked for a long time at the prone body of his comrade. "So do I," he said after a while, "but I ain't goin' to tell you."

Ed sat up. "Well," he announced, "I made them eyes and I touched the high places in conversation. I was a hit! She thinks I'm the goods. She likes me, and then some. She says if she ever found a good man she wanted to hitch up to she'd go back to the bad lands, whatever they are! She says the two of them — she an' him — would go back there. She told me all about the country. Mountains just showing way off on this side. Good air an' water, snappy — boys riding on horses. People making money raising apples. And everything straight. Guys stoppin' in for supper with their wives. Some class to it. And about flowers in the front yard an' dogs. She ain't so much of a lemon in looks after you see her a lot."

"Gee!" said Orinoco. "You must wear blinders. Her face hits you like a pair of brass knuckles."

"What's aching you?" asked Ed, with some heat. "I've stuck to you pretty well, haven't I? If I liked you on account of your beauty I would have hit you in the face with a hammer long ago. Why ain't it the same with a woman? Them that wears perfume and looks so well ain't always the goods. They make me sick. I'm tired of them. I couldn't stick to them. It's what's inside that makes the goods. What you gets is the tomatoes not the label on the can. I'm sick of them round faces! I tell you I wish I was dead."

Orinoco cast his beady eyes on his companion. "What's this got to do with ham sandwiches?" he

asked. "Do we get the money, or won't she loosen up? What do you think?"

The young man pulled off his coat and hung it on one of the two hooks that had not been pulled out with the surrounding plaster.

"On the level," cautioned Orinoco. "We're both in on this, aren't we, kid?"

"Gee!" exclaimed the other. He paced up and down a minute. "Orinoco," said he, "it looks as if I could get the money if I wanted it."

The older man blew out the light. "Well, that's the candy," said he.

The next morning Orinoco said, "You look as if you hadn't slept long enough to crease the sheets."

"Well, I ain't," said Ed. "I've been out. I've been walkin'."

"Walkin', where? What's the matter with you, anyhow? You act like a pair of rubber boots!"

Ed did not choose to answer. He spent his morning with Orinoco reading pink sporting papers and playing dominoes with the stranded actors in the next room, a room dignified by wall paper.

At four o'clock of the second afternoon he arose, yawned, stretched in front of the cracked mirror, tied his bow necktie in fore-in-hand style so that the freshest parts would show, and, without saying anything to Orinoco, went out. The other man also arose, stretched, yawned, pulled off the cuffs, which would not stand an-

other turning, and poked his head out of the door to see Ed go down the stairs. "Ain't you goin' to say good-by?" he called. "Say, kid, ain't you goin' to say good-by?"

"What's the matter with you?" returned Ed impatiently. "I'll be back at six."

He strolled out into the street. The light was all thrown eastward, as if it were a calcium illumination for the entrance of spring. The gentle warmth had drawn the smell of the season out of the fields and a breeze toward the river had brought it to the city. Engines snorted and panted happily in the railroad yards and a negro on a passing truck rolled his whip around in his hand and half shut his white eyes. Ed stopped before the labor agency and read the signs over once more. He went from there to the curbstone, looked up at the far-away, thin clouds and, with his hands deep in his pockets, rocked forward and backward on his heels and toes.

After awhile he turned suddenly. The restaurant was not far away. He slouched along toward it and pushed open the door. She was sitting reading a novel beside the cash register. No one else was there.

"Say, have I got to eat something to talk to you?" he asked.

She laughed, and singing joyfully to herself brought him a large V of Washington pie. "I saved this for you," she said.

But he stopped before his fork had cut down through the point of it — before it reached the strawberry jam.

"You can get to know each other well pretty quick if you can spend one hour after another together and all at one time. What?"

"Yes," said Carrie, as if this were a happy thought indeed.

He looked back at her gray eyes, painfully.

"Say," he went on. "When I walked home with you last night, say, you would have kissed me then — after we talked about goin' out there and — say, you were willin' to kiss me, what?"

"Yes," she answered. "But you —"

"No, I didn't," he whispered. "I'll tell you why I didn't. I ain't on the level with you."

She turned a little white. She brushed her hair back nervously. She picked up a spoon and bent it a little at the middle in her strong fingers. "How do you mean, Ed?" she asked, trying to steady her voice.

Thereupon, drawing in a great gulp of breath as if he needed much of it, he began. He told her much more than was necessary, for now and then he would awkwardly go far afield into a description of Cuppenheimer, who came along and broke him when he had just saved enough to buy the fixtures in a billiard room, or of a set of furs he gave Edie De Vere, or of how Orinoco, whose real signature was now forgotten, obtained his nickname. But he gave her the whole story. When he came to telling of the plan to win her affection and cheat her of her money he tried to laugh about it.

It was not until he looked up and saw that she was not smiling that he became serious again. She did not interrupt him. She gave forth no exclamation. He was forced to finish by himself.

It was at an end.

She did not move; her gaze was fixed just over his shoulder and there was an expression in her eyes as in the eyes of one who sees some object approaching from a long way off.

"Do you know what makes me sick about telling you this?" he said suddenly. "It sounds *good.* Goodness makes me sick. If I agree to play on the level, all right. But goodness is a frost. Goodness is a cranberry, girlie. I told Orinoco that what I'd do to you would be a good and plenty and then some. I couldn't tell him I'd got mixed. I couldn't tell him I had to play on the level with you, *first.* I think goodness is all to the bad. Do you know what I mean?"

"Yes," she said, and nodded once.

Ed leaned over the table toward her. "Say something!" said he, fiercely. "Say something!"

"I was just thinking," she answered, struggling again with her voice. "I was just thinking that it would be awful to me if you hadn't meant what you said to me. I don't know what I'd do."

"Gee!" said he, under his breath.

"Of course, now you've told me all this," she went on, "I know you meant it. I know now it was real. Of

course, I can trust you more than ever. Then you — well, it just seems as if you couldn't help trustin' me, though I ain't ever done anything like you have, to show it. Remember I told you once that folks was usually all right at the bottom, Ed. Don't you believe it? Look at us!"

"Gee!" said he again, and shook his head.

"Why didn't you just go away?" she asked after several moments. "You could have done that, couldn't you?"

"I could, I suppose."

"Then you didn't want to — that's plain," she said. "So I suppose we can go out there to the ranch — to my home — as we planned — together, Ed?" She was looking up to meet his unwinking eyes.

He stared back at her wonderingly, and then bent his head down on to the table into the curve of his arm.

"Oh, gee!" he whispered.

By and by he got up painfully; it seemed now as if he was afraid of her. He felt about awkwardly until his hand touched hers. When he bent down to kiss her, she closed her eyes. Afterward he stood beside her chair silently. They could hear the clock ticking on the wall—the clock with the bill-of-fare cards slipped in around its base.

"What's your friend's name?" she asked finally.

"Orinoco."

"I suppose you ought to tell him."

"Yes, I ought to tell him. He expects me to deal

square. He's been pretty good to me. I suppose I've done a dirty trick to him. I don't know what he'll say. I'd better wait and give it to him to-morrow, what?"

"No," she said. "He'll be glad to hear it, like as not. He ain't mean. I'll go with you. It'll only be a minute. I don't need a hat."

"I got a boss now, sure," said Ed, as they crossed the street. "That's got me goin', girlie. That's a whale!"

She smiled back at him over her angular shoulder in answer as they started up the narrow stairs of the hotel.

At the top they came to a little counter where the registry sheet and the keyboard have their places. The proprietor of "The Dewey" sat in a rocking-chair behind this counter reading the evening paper. He was an alarmingly stout person with absurdly small eyes.

"Where's my friend?" Ed asked.

"Let's see, brother," returned the other, casting a suspicious glance at the girl. "Are you in 20? Well, your friend's gone."

"Gone!" cried Ed.

"Um hum," nodded the other until a new fold of skin appeared above his collar. "Yes, he's gone. He got a job across the street at the agency. Transportation free, I guess. Train went at five, he said. Didn't leave any address. He left a message for you, though. What was it? Let's see. Oh, yes, he said to me, 'When the kid comes in, just say to him that I knew what was doing, and everything is all right.'"

A GLIMMER OF TRUTH

THOSE who have been to Haddock Harbor with the summer colony remember, of course, Miss Evelyn Du Fresne's cottage on the banks of the Tide River. It has so pleasant an outlook across the eddying waters toward the soft greens and browns of the salt marshes, and toward the grays and yellows of the wind-swept, rock-ridden coast land beyond. To be sure, it is only in a sea-breeze that one can hear the sound of the surf on the beach, below there, but old gnarled apple trees and coarse ferns, and a spring which feeds a native orchid bed in the little, sweet-odored swamp, are all near at hand. The cottage, too, is made with heavy, concrete walls and red tile floors, and the interior is lined with plaster as clean and white as fine linen, against which old mahogany furniture looks very well; in the hottest midday it is cool within.

As every one knows, this dwelling reflects the appearance and personality of its owner. She herself has the same coolness and quietness, and many forget, in admiration for the gentle atmosphere which she carries about her, that she is one of the foremost sculptors of her time, who, still enlivened with youth, yet seems to have mastered the constancy of old age.

For a woman ranked as first of women in her art, she is free from the expected show of artistic temperament, unless it is urged that she at times does her work feverishly, as if for the moment driven by some unnatural, spiritual force. She has always remained sympathetic, but unmarried. Still beautiful, her mouth is a trifle hardened; each month a few more gray strands appear in her dark hair, but each month her figure is as tall and graceful, as perfect as ever. The strongest sign of insincerity to be found in her character is in the fact that she arranges all objects and designs about her with a cruel passion for pureness and severity of art.

Those who have been irritated, upon first meeting her, by Miss DuFresne's direct confident manner, have only to remember that she has carved out her own life with her own endeavor, just as in her studio, she moulds, for four or five thousand dollars, the head of some self-satisfied man or woman who may pay the price.

The day that Dixon Brent, famed for his great wealth, came to see her, she had been sitting in a nook of the cottage entrance for several hours in the afternoon. The summer studio, built out from the cottage itself, was filled with a disorder of buckets, cloths, sheets of profile sketches, moulding sticks, photographs; and on a center-table, all by itself, propped up so that the light would fall upon it, was an old daguerreotype mounted in a black rubber case upon red plush. The lazy, silent, summer afternoon and a failure to twist a real person-

ality into the large clay model had combined to drive her out of doors. With a sipping of iced tea, she dreamed the hours away, unhappy because, after all, the very thing which her brain would have upon the modelled face would not define itself for her hand to place there.

The chorus of locusts, amidst the stretch of high wheat tops and belated daisy blossoms, finally lapsed into the squeak of the turnstile at the end of the lane. She looked up to see the man standing there. He was waiting for a little boy, clad in purple-shadowed white, whose pink, bare leg was swung over the turnstile in an attempt to ride upon it as on a merry-go-round. The youngster, with laughter, finally climbed down, reached up for his father's stout hand, and so, together, the two came up the path.

Dixon Brent's voice was trained to a deep, confident ring, without tenderness. He simply announced himself to Miss DuFresne, who held out her hand to him, expressing no surprise at the sound of his name.

"I have come a long way," he said, "to my old home. The last time was fifteen years ago, but I had heard that my father's portrait was being sculptured for the Seminary. It made an added interest. And I have brought my son."

The woman looked across at him as he moved back into the wicker chair, and, reaching out, put her forearm over the slight shoulders of the boy, who stood be-

side her. He looked up and smiled silently as he perched himself on the chair arm.

"On the whole," said the great business man awkwardly, "there is something ridiculous about this return to the old place. I was just looking at that inlet across the river yonder. Do they ever go after crabs there now?"

Miss DuFresne shook her head.

"*I* used to," said he almost sheepishly, and hurried to add: "We got here last night, and I stayed in the village rather than go down to the beach. When I grew up here, the beach was only the edge of the land where the people went with ox teams for loads of sea-moss. The village, however, is much the same as it used to be, and in the evening it is delightful. I took a long walk last night. I believe the people here, with their lights in the houses early in the evening — the fresh air — the lack of complication — I believe they are happier."

"Oh, yes," said Miss DuFresne, pressing her lips together, "they are."

"I came to see the — my father's portrait," said he. "When I heard that the boys and girls at the Seminary, after all this time — twenty years after his death — had voluntarily contributed the money for it — I cannot tell you. I was touched, you understand." He leaned forward over the straw hat that rested on his knees.

"I should say that Dr. Brent's personality was won-

derfully permanent," answered the artist, nodding her head.

"I offered, of course, to pay any expense necessary to have the best work possible," he said.

Miss DuFresne smiled again. "Well," said she, "perhaps I should explain that I went to the Seminary. I was one of those who remembered him, a little hazily, to be sure. But the study of his life — the ideal that it represents — interested me afresh. It is an informal secret between myself and the board of trustees that I am to have the privilege of making the portrait without charge."

"Oh," said Brent, "I did not know. Then that explains their answer to my letter." He rubbed his knees.

"Before we go into the studio will you have tea?" asked Miss DuFresne easily, and nodded to the white-haired maid, who had appeared in the doorway.

"Yes," she said, apparently addressing the little boy, who had climbed up on the stone seat. "I was much interested in this portrait bust, Mr. Brent. The older I grow, the more admiration I have for quiet service and the persistent, growing love of service. The people with infinite steadiness of purpose and patience are rare enough. And the really lovely human character, and the really strong man, is that one who patiently loves others, not hysterically, but with his life work."

"My father always had a good, hearty laugh. He was

a fighter, too, in spirit," Brent added hastily, as if afraid that the artist had forgotten the value of virile qualities.

She smiled back at his anxiety, a little piqued, perhaps, that he should suppose that in her entirely free and experienced life she had not learned the difference between watered milk and old wine. But a moment later she recalled that he was only a successful business man — a sort of fruit-laden vine without grace of foliage, and forgave his dullness.

"Dr. Brent had flavor," she said, adjusting her words to her listener, and he relapsed into his chair, satisfied.

"On Sundays," she pursued immediately, "I used to go to the church — the one that the lightning burned — to hear him preach. My family were all farmers — my father was an immigrant, you know — settled up the state, and in those days I had little plaid calico frocks that were so stiff with starch that I could scarcely let my legs dangle down from the old, red-covered seats in the Seminary pew. All of us were very orthodox, but my father had a habit of putting his arm around my mother and saying, 'There's no poison in Dr. Brent, Amelie.' Oh, his reputation went all over the state — slowly, quietly. But it was not as a preacher or candidate for governor or master of the State Seminary that he was remembered."

"Just as a man," interrupted Dixon Brent with gruff earnestness, setting down his tea-cup.

Miss DuFresne nodded. "But I do not remember you," she went on. "You must have gone off to college before my coming. And no one knew that I was educated here until I told them." She looked thoughtfully at the hard lines in the face of the successful son of the old doctor. "They thought that I built this place just because I liked the view, perhaps. But really it was right out in that field there that your father first told me how fine it was to be an artist, and I was only a little girl trying to sketch the river. I remember he said that it was satisfactory to be able to augment the beauty in the world and the appreciation of beauty, but that a great artist must also be like a soldier, obedient and patient and brave and, like all great soldiers, pure in heart and kind."

The man looked about him again at the cottage walls and the vines. His eyes glistened with pleasure. He pointed eastward with his finger as if he had picked out the very spot where this advice was given.

"Well, well," said he with pride. "This is all news to me — about your beginning, and so brilliant a career. Well, well!"

The little boy had galloped down the slope after an elusive butterfly, which he sought to capture; his father watched him for a moment and ran his fingers through his grizzled hair toward the bald spot.

"I am very sorry I was not more influenced by him myself," he said wistfully. "I think I must have

missed the richness of association of father and son. That is my only boy, too," he went on with a gesture. "It is unfortunate that I am so old. When he is twenty I will be an old man, even if I live. I have made many mistakes —" He seemed to indicate that he had a philosophy which he would like to be able to teach his son, yet he left his sentence unfinished.

"I want to see the bust of my father," he announced simply. "I came from Chicago — all the way — that is, I would be pleased if I might."

Miss DuFresne frowned. "It is one of the vexations of portraiture," said she, with her mind upon her failure, "that the more one wishes to do well, the more elusive success becomes."

"You are not pleased?"

She shook her head, solemnly.

"Well," sighed Brent, knowing nothing further to say. He wiped his forehead with his large handkerchief and called to his little son, who ran up toward them, catching the daisy heads between his fingers.

She led the two through the dark hall to the studio, and at the door they stood a moment, half awed by the greater light and the disorder of the room, while Miss DuFresne walked slowly toward the draped bust and drew from it the covering.

"Oh!" said the boy in a shrill key.

For the mass of moulded clay became on the instant the dominating object in the room. Larger than life,

the features contained an extraordinary strength. In the face of the model, in the poise of the head, in the expanse of forehead there seemed to be a suggestion of endless patience and harnessed power. Any one would have said, indeed all have said, that this was a marvellous portrait.

It startled Brent a little. He dropped his arms. For many minutes he confronted the clay face that gazed into his, without making a motion, without uttering a word. As with all men who are a trifle fat, his emotion made its presence known only by his heavy breathing.

Miss DuFresne spoke first. "And yet," she said impatiently, "I have missed some great, essential note."

"I do not know," he answered without looking toward her, "I do not know — yet."

He passed his hand across his forehead. "Do I look like him?" he asked softly. "Just a little?" He seemed to be begging for an affirmative; he searched her expression for encouragement. The little boy seemed to comprehend the pathetic desire of the older man, for he reached up again and caught the latter's hand. "I am a great believer in strength of heredity. I should look like him a little, I should think."

Miss DuFresne smiled sympathetically. She felt an unusual embarrassment. The successful man of industry beside her showed on his hardened features much of loveless strife and old, fierce desire. A touch of refinement, played beneath, but, after all, the immediate pur-

suit of selfishness had left his expression trained to the commonplace mould. The difference between the living head and the head of clay—between the father and the son—was the astounding dramatic fact, at the moment, obvious. Miss DuFresne could only smile painfully.

Brent did not say more. He plucked with his stout fingers at the collar of his little son's coat. Miss Du Fresne saw, as he glanced at the floor, that the corners of his hard mouth had drooped into an expression of bitterness and disappointment.

"We have led different kinds of lives," he said finally and with reluctance. "Perhaps it is a little late to comment upon it," he went on. "I realize."

The artist picked a little lump of clay from the table, squeezed it, and threw it back into a pan.

"I wish I looked a little like him — my father," he said again. Then he added hastily, "It is a wonderful portrait."

She looked up at him, and then raised both hands with her active fingers toward the model. "But there is something not there," she said impatiently. "Can't you see?" I've worked for days. I can't grasp it. I know what it is, and yet —"

"What is it?" asked Brent awkwardly. "Can't I help? What is it? I begin to see —"

"Oh, I hardly know," she exclaimed impatiently, with a show of her purely feminine nature, "I can't say. Perhaps it's love of men."

"Love of men?" asked Brent.

"Yes, something rare — a life of it. That's what I want. I want this portrait to *say* it — strong, red-blooded love of men, like Lincoln's, Mr. Brent — like your father's."

The other nodded; he shifted his feet, and a moment later he moved back to sit down in the big oak settle in the studio's corner. The lad's little hand was still in his; he drew the slight form into the curve of his arm and, leaning forward, silently, he gazed with wide eyes across the room.

Suddenly he caught his own flesh and blood into his arms fiercely, as if it would escape him. He ran his awkward fingers through the little boy's moist, disordered hair. "Men, Bobby," he whispered so low that it was barely audible to Miss DuFresne. "Serve them, my son. Don't forget! Love of men!"

The woman caught the little, peaceful smile that was left upon his mouth. The light of the late summer afternoon that came from the western window made it clear to her, and with a little gasp of surprise she stepped to the bust and, with all the deftness of hand acquired by infinite toil and love of her labor, she put upon the plaster face the last stroke of her work that ever went into this well-known portrait.

"Oh, look, father!" cried the little son. "Look at that man now!"

THE FINAL SCORE

THIS is a story about Jim Cloaker which not every one knows. In the height of his prominence a few years ago when he was playing polo so well that you sometimes saw his picture even in the cheaper sporting magazines, and when he owned the best steeplechaser in America, he was regarded among the other rich and wild young men as being in a class all by himself. At thirty-five his outdoor life, which had included amateur correspondence service in the Boer War, had failed to offset the effect of his manner of indoor living. He was still brown with sunlight; but large cities, late hours, electric lights, places to dine and carriage bills based on the past-midnight schedule of charge, had ruined his stomach muscles and fattened his jaws.

Jim was too heavy by twenty-eight pounds; the doctor said his heart was protesting. Occasionally women who saw him spur his horse on the polo field, when he had given up playing and acted as an official, called him a brute. He began to wear flowers in his lapel, as, subconsciously, he realized a new necessity for relieving the rather gross effect of his person.

Now, the truth of the matter is that Jim had not coarsened very much in his soul. Those who knew him best in New York and Philadelphia and Paris knew that,

in spite of his stern way of dealing with his horses and dogs, the animals loved him and would do infinitely more for him than for the stablemen who lived with them every day in the year. Almost every one who knew of his short affair with Margery Updale thought he was the villain of the newspaper drama, but the truth of the matter was that he was gentle in his attention as the most gallant knight, that the fact of her being an actress had nothing whatever to do with his decision to go abroad, that he really did not love her enough, and that he told her after a great deal of boyish thought that he did not believe she was the type of woman who could make him the kind of husband she would want. She says to-day that she was sorry that she did not insist upon making the attempt.

This is not telling the story, of course. But now that Jim Cloaker has dropped out of the club and the newspapers, no end of persons have forgotten the name, except as they may connect it with the Cloaker fortune, so it was necessary to sketch a little up to the moment when, in the winter of 1903, he put in at the West Indian island on his yacht. Of course, it might have been stated shortly by saying that he had done himself plenty of harm, but had never voluntarily harmed any one else.

Nobody knew what made him go off alone just at that time. Usually, his cruise to Southern waters was taken with a very jolly company aboard, and with Mrs. Gray

or the Gaston couple from Baltimore as chaperons. Perhaps, in spite of his somewhat coarse and frequent laugh, he had times when he estimated himself low enough to feel depressed. His real personality was always kept far-away from most men or women, and Keppler used to say that at the bottom Jim had a foundation of the same material that makes some little children cry softly about their own existence.

Whatever his mood might have been, it seemed to find comfort in whiskey and soda. When Jim put in at this port—that, for reasons which will become obvious, must remain unnamed,—he was not in very good shape. Newspapers from home, brought to him on board, shook in his hands from other causes than the movement of the soft, tropical breeze; even the darkest of cigars had failed to make that pleasant catch at the back of his toughened throat. In spite of this he strolled up into the town, with its wooden, color-tinted houses, and its lazy, part-Spanish, part-Cockney, part-Negro, part-American people. He even went into a curio store where gay seashells, silver novelties, coral branches and picture postcards were displayed in the window.

The interior was dark and smelled of the red and green paint on a counter of children's toys. Jim says the smell recalled to him the taste of one of the young ladies — possibly Mrs. Noah — whose head he had bitten when he was left alone with his first Ark. He picked over badly colored views with an amusing idea

of sending one to each of the stable-boys at home; intent upon them, he did not see that another customer had come into the lonesome shop and was standing behind him. Her hand was the first he knew of her. It appeared as it reached forward for a packet of views. Jim's eyes were uncertain and watery from the tropical sunlight of the day and burned with the fever of alcohol in the blood, but he saw that this woman's hand was delicately browned and refined and expressive. Although he had acted as judge of beagles and the green-hunter class, he was, in fact, a much more competent judge of women's hands. So, upon seeing this one, graceful, strong and bare of rings, he stepped back like an old art critic to look upon the owner's personality.

He had an unconscious rudeness about looking at people. The woman colored a little without meeting his gaze. She was straight and strong, though quite as old as Jim himself. She gave the impression of being all gold, hair in two shades of it, skin in that warm, frosted, metallic state which rarely, and so the more delightfully, accompanies the very light type. She was not pretty. Jim heard her say to the much-powdered Cuban shop-girl that she had promised to select the favors for a dance at the Porto Chica.

Across the street was one of the few brick buildings on the whole island. Jim looked at the woman again, and then scraped his beefy shoulders through the doorway of the shop and trod through the sun-baked lime-

stone dust to the entrance of the Gulf Stream Bank. An electric fan sang in the president's office and blew a continuous cloud of excellent cigar smoke out the crack of the door.

Jim walked in.

"Hello," said the lean old islander, whose feet were on his desk. "You are a stranger. Strangers break monotony. Welcome to our two thousand acres, and sit down with this cigar."

Jim smiled. "Very good of you," said he; "I'll ask you to cash a check in a minute. I think my uncle, Maltby Cloaker, is your New York correspondent."

"Yep," answered the banker, who made it a rule never to be impressed. "My name's Conger. I'm also Collector of the Port. I saw your yacht. I remembered her name. We remember everything down here. We've just been terribly excited — a new crop of sapodillas is ripe!"

"Knock off work," Jim suggested, closing his eyes dreamily. "Suppose we go down on board together. We'll have cocktails and lunch. This afternoon we'll go out and harpoon a sawfish or a loggerhead, and to-night — well, what's going on to-night?" He looked out of the window to catch a last glimpse of the woman who had come out of the curio store.

"Dance — Porto Chica — good punch. What do you say?" replied Conger.

"Excellent!" said Jim. "By the way, who is buying

the favors?" He cast a glance at the wall-papered ceiling.

"God bless you, this is a small island, but how should an old man like me know? Do you see that cocoanut tree? It dropped one on a nigger yesterday—would have killed a white man. Must be two hundred years old and never did anything like that before. This dust makes your throat dry, doesn't it?" He reached for his immense Panama hat.

Jim had a dull afternoon, no doubt. Conger is the old-fashioned kind who belonged to the day of the American-plan hotel and black-walnut furniture; a few drinks take away his dry, natural humor and several cause him to tell the story of O'Brian and the Peaches.

The dance was a relief. Porto Chica, Jim found, was anything but a port; it was a wooden casino decorated within by date-palms and bunting. People had gathered at the punch-bowl in the corner: there was a British official, a Spanish exporter who wore a magnificent gold chain about his neck, three construction engineers in white duck evening dress, a knot of curiously varied women of all shapes and sizes, each one trying to look young and laugh with the abandon of youth, and several girls, too young—if not too innocent—to be there, who were at that point of life when a theatrical manager would have called them "squabs." Other persons came in, little by little. Most of them seemed either too fast or too slow. Jim saw his curio-

store lady of the morning. She was dressed in a rather cheap and pretty gown. She wore no jewellery. Every one seemed to like her. She was trying to enjoy herself — Jim saw her go to the bowl's edge five times.

In truth, he was greatly amused at the whole affair. He reflected that it was about as amusing as a dance his mother once gave at Poincaies, and cost so much less! There was no hurry, but later, as he expected, he met the one with the golden look. Her name was Mrs. Bradford!

It was one of the moments in Jim's life when he was unsteadied. He stepped back heavily at the sound of the married title, as if some one had pushed him on the chest. For some reason he had not considered the possibility that she had ever belonged to some one else; indeed, he probably had not even realized that it made much difference to him one way or the other. Now the fact was known he assumed that the husband was alive. They lifted their glasses and their eyes together and drank as if to him.

Later on they went together out of the heat of exercise to the breeze from the sea. The water was afire where it lapped the bottom of the moonlighted, glistening cliffs, where even in the night-tinged currents the tide was touched with the tropical beryl-green. There they stood together, looking off toward the northern horizon, with the sound of the rustling palms in their ears, conscious of the peculiar night fragrance in the air.

"You said you were born here?" asked Jim, clasping and unclasping the iron rail with his heavily moulded hands.

She laughed softly. She had seen Jim's name so often and there was a pleasure of vanity in his attention. Every one had been whispering about his identity, his cosmopolitan reputation, his scandals and money and his hard riding and living — for there is no spot in the world lacking its three or four women who keep up in such matters to add to their distinction of knowing the wicked world well. Mrs. Bradford was not impervious to the fact that he had singled her out. She smiled again. But when she answered it was with her characteristic honesty.

"Oh, yes," she said, "and lived here most of my life. I went to the States to school those winters when my father could scrape the money together. Naval officers really were my education. I knew them of six nationalities, and in four successive affairs I learned to speak three languages. It took two Germans to teach me the 'ch.' I feel as if I'd been at every capital in Europe. And then, of course, I read a great deal. I know what you must think about living here, because since I have been married I have lived outside the island, too."

"In the very narrowing life of New York?" Jim grumbled with his rough voice.

She nodded and went on, "Books,— here," she said. "I used to read and read! Then I had to come back

because — At any rate, it is a very pleasant winter climate. I find I have lots of nice beaux. I write about them to Ed. It amuses and pleases him."

"It would me," said Jim. "I'd hate to have an unattractive wife." He ran his hand over his high forehead.

"He's in New York now, you know," said she. "People on the island think we're such a strange couple — being apart like this. But they hardly know Ed. I know that you would like him — a good fellow. I'm so proud of him, you know."

Jim smiled down at her. But when she looked away he set his square jaw.

"People tell all sorts of things about why I'm here. It's ridiculous. You won't be here long enough to hear."

"I'm not so sure," Jim said. "A doctor came aboard late this afternoon and said I had a temperature — the island fever — 103. He said I mustn't leave. Just a good case of fever I picked up at Key West, where there isn't much fever, anyhow."

"Oh!" said she, touching his wrist unaffectedly with her fingertips, "I believe it's true. Why did you come out here to-night?" She looked up at him.

"Lonesome, I think," said Jim, bowing his head a little. "I become more whimsical as I grow older. You said you would be here for some time?"

"Yes," she interrupted nervously. "I was about to

tell you that I was here to economize. Business reversals. Ed is suffering in a horrible, stuffy little room in New York, and we're apart — I with my sister's family, visiting. We're saving money. Some of the women here will invent all sorts of explanations for you. I might as well inflict it on you the first minute I have a chance, otherwise they —"

"Oh, no. I shouldn't suppose they would," he said, firmly. "That water looks cool, now, doesn't it? It does to me. I think I'd like to swim a mile or two in that moonlight."

"Sharks!" she suggested. "And it wouldn't do your temperature a bit of good." She looked toward him anxiously. Jim took one step toward her; there sounded a low rumble in his thick throat, he clasped his hands to his sides.

"More punch?" said he with sudden ease.

"Let's not have any more," she answered. "Let's take one of these ramshackle old carriages and drive down the Buena Vista to my door and say good-night, and then you can go back to your own bunk, which is the sensible thing to do. It is quite proper. Here every driver — there are seven on the island — is almost a licensed chaperon."

Jim looked in at the whirl of black and white and brighter colors where the others danced. His eyes not only were dull with the infection, but in them, for a moment, was an expression of mental weariness.

"Your humble servant," said he, suddenly, and together they climbed into the carriage. The ragged driver talked in bad Spanish to the bony horse as they faced the blue haze that hovered over the sleeping town. After they had driven in silence for several moments past the huts and cottages Mrs. Bradford turned at just the right moment to see the great frame of Jim Cloaker fall forward, unconscious, against the front seat.

The driver stopped his horse, turned around and uttered a single word. "Dengue!" he said, with the skill of an old diagnostician.

"The doctor?" suggested the woman.

"Oh, he gone, señora, a Boga Pablo. The house was dark."

"Drive to the Occidental wharf," she commanded with quick decision. "His yacht is there, and probably more conveniences on board than in any house in town." So the carriage went on, swinging down among the shabby commission houses of the half mile of harbor front. In the second floor of one of them lights blazed behind the blinds, and a tin-pan piano whacked the stillness.

Jim raised himself suddenly. "Hey? What's this — what's this?" he said. Then, realizing the awkwardness of his performance, he straightened up like a soldier and said: "I'm extremely sorry. It's taken you quite out of your way. Turn back, driver — Mrs. Bradford's."

"I think not," she answered.

Jim had never been denied his own wilful way. His size, the fire of his eye, the depth of his voice, his own consciousness of the money and physical strength behind him had trained him to overbear people. He looked up in surprise, uttered an exclamation, and lapsed into the stupor of the fever again.

They took him on board the *Tortuga*, and Mrs. Bradford sent the driver for her sister and the doctor. She had seen that the servants were helpless, so she rolled up her sleeves, called for a pail of ice water, searched the lockers for medicine, and was still busy when the doctor and her sister arrived toward the first pink dawn streak in the white haze behind the mangrove clumps to the eastward. She was a little tired, the world seemed a little unreal. The adventure had been strange. It made a story hard to tell. And, moreover, she had found, in the watchpocket of the delirious man's waistcoat, a rose. She was sure that she had worn that very bud by itself at her neck. Shivering a little as she went over the gangway to the wharf, she drew her foolishly thin scarf about her and stood for a moment there, looking down into the water.

Jim had a time of it, he admits. But every one, particularly those persons who are familiar with his type, and particularly persons who find island life dull, know that he, not less than his hospitality, is attractive for any number of idle hours. His convalescence, after a

few days of a hard-running fever, was a round of parties on board his boat. Propped up in a steamer chair he took the Daggetts, and the Coldbrooks, and the rich MacAvoys, and the three construction engineers, and the gay Miss Teneriffe with the thin nose, and the roly-poly Miss Burg — a complete and curious island aristocracy — all about for trips and dinners, with plenty of nice things to drink; and gave more than once an entertainment on the afterdeck which Joshua Conger, president of the Gulf Stream Bank, called "a lawn party with a stick in it."

Mrs. Bradford was often there. She drank and sang with the rest of them. She embroidered shirtwaists in the Spanish style on afternoon excursions to the Bottom weed lighthouse, and told Jim that she expected him to buy them for his nieces. It was a heydey. The little set were not irreproachable. One of the construction engineers, who hailed from a technical school in Maine, said it was too rich for his blood, and that playing bridge with women cardsharps was not to his mind a profitable amusement. He dropped out.

Even when all the rest were there Jim's eyes followed Mrs. Bradford about with a curious new light in them. The two never made any definite attempt to talk to each other. When they chatted at all it was with easy understanding about aims of men and women and methods of gaining happiness; and occasionally they spoke wholesomely of the responsibility that lay upon both men and

women to fit themselves to pass down a good inheritance; and about good books and poor plays. Often enough an afternoon party would find at its close that Mrs. Bradford had been sitting, as if by chance, perched up somewhere on the deck near Jim — who always held the centre of the stage, like an emperor, in a wicker chair — and that the usual dash in both their spirits had lapsed into silent enjoyment of the laughter about them, of the ice tinkling in glasses, and the absurd antics of Miss Teneriffe and Captain Bond, of the British Army.

The day came for Jim to go. It was long after his fever had departed, and the time he had lingered became the subject of much wonder and open speculation among the garrulous island set. It had been a pleasant experience, but could not last forever. He gave a good-by dinner.

Jim had a faculty of making it easy for all about him to drink freely. Conger, the banker, remembered a past adventure with this pleasant trait of the gay cosmopolitan. He had gone home with a cigar tied to his gray chin beard with a piece of pink ribbon. Furthermore, he was going to accompany Jim on the northward cruise as far as Jacksonville, and the sea motion had never agreed with him. He turned his glass down, and the only others who were not unreasonably hilarious were Jim and Mrs. Bradford. Cloaker drank heavily, but his eyes were a little lifeless and tired; she did not

assume her usual vivacity. Her golden look seemed, for the moment, tarnished.

"I wish," she said to Jim, "that you would see Ed when you are back in New York. He is probably working hard now, but he has the heart of a sportsman. You would like him, I am sure. I'm so proud of him myself!"

"Of course," Jim replied enthusiastically, "and it will be a great pleasure for me to hunt him up."

"Good-by," she said. "We will see you again some time, I hope." She was standing at her carriage on the wharf. Miss Teneriffe had already climbed in with the British captain. They were waiting for her.

Jim nodded. He seemed out of breath. Two or three times he attempted to speak. Finally, he laughed softly with the characteristic low rumble in his throat.

"They have said that you were another of my beaux," she said, with her eyes on the ground.

Jim flushed and shut his teeth together. "And they would have told you so if they had not been afraid of you. They would have said things about Ed." She spoke softly.

"As I remember it," she went on, "we have never said a single personal thing to each other, have we?"

"No," said Jim, looking her in the eyes. "Not one."

"If —"

"For God's sake, don't let us begin!" he said quietly, and having taken her cold hand for a moment he walked

quickly toward the carriage and stood with bared head as the vehicle rumbled off over the boards.

"Conger," he said, as the two men sat back in wicker chairs, looking out over the yacht's foam that tracked backward to midnight, "it seems foolish for me to be consuming all this good whiskey and cold soda alone."

"Does it?" said the wily old islander. "Then why do it? It's a wonderful night without any assistance. Look at those white mullet streaks on the water — whiter than the moonlight." He turned his chair a little so that he could see his host's face.

"Miss Teneriffe was amusing," the old man said after several moments. "I like girls to be vivacious and free from prudery, provided they have the real woman in 'em. Eh? Like — well, like Elizabeth Bradford."

Again he scrutinized Jim's profile.

"She has had a hard time if any one has. Mrs. Daggett mentioned that some one of the women had attempted to tell you. She said you found an excuse to consider some other subject."

"Did I?" said Jim calmly.

"Yes," Conger said. "But, you see, Ed Bradford is one of those attractive fellows, and a bit wild. You see, he drank a good deal and gambled. Then, two years ago he was in the insurance business and there was fifteen thousand dollars which went wrong in his hands. They even arrested him. The prosecution was stopped. He was to solicit business for the company and turn

back to them whatever he could to discharge the — the obligation."

Jim's glass fell out of his hand, crashing to pieces on the desk, and the largest piece of ice slid out beyond their feet to glisten in the moonlight.

"I was only going to say," Conger went on carelessly, "that it illustrates the astounding qualities of a fine woman. She had never been very happy with him, though she loved him. She had tried to make him a little less foolish, intemperate, and extravagant; but when the last trouble came she went to him and engineered the whole arrangement by which he was to keep out of the penitentiary. She sold all of her own clothes and jewellery and started him off on the new struggle and left him at the very time her whole heart was full of desire to be with him. She came down here to the fearful dullness of this island, and the disagreeable sister who has headaches, and the old friends who were whispering all sorts of stories, and the old guard of sweethearts who would sympathize with her, which was just what she didn't want."

Jim had turned about. His thick fingers pulled at the wickerwork.

Conger cast a reflective eye at the mass of thunderclouds gathered over the sandbars to the westward. "Don't women beat all hell?" said he, softly. "I heard her say to you, 'I'm so proud of him,' and within hearing of those who knew!"

"Well played!" Jim said aloud. "Well played!"

"Exactly!" said old Conger, fingering his watch as he looked into Cloaker's face. "I think I'll change my mind, Cloaker. I'm rather old and rusty in such affairs, but I liked your friendship with her. It seemed to be cut out of almost the same piece of sportsmanship as her loyalty to him. Now, loyalty is one fine and wonderful thing about her, but love is another matter. I noticed ——"

"You are becoming talkative!" Jim said slowly, spacing each word.

Conger bowed. "I said I had changed my mind, Cloaker," he said gracefully. "I would think it an especial honor at this moment to have the privilege of drinking with you. Where will you stop along the coast after leaving me?"

"Nowhere," replied Cloaker, settling his big body back into his chair ."I'll make the shortest possible run to Sandy Hook. I want to see some one in New York."

Sandy Hook probably seemed a long way off to Jim at that moment. He had grown up with a wilful impatience of all time and distance. To these factors in human life he would like to have given orders as to a slow French waiter.

All along the Atlantic Coast he sat out near the log-line on the stern rail, and now and then took a reading of the dial with a watch in his hand. He even wished he

had taken a train on the Florida East Coast. It pleased him, finally, to see the big city rising out of the morning gray behind the Statue of Liberty, with the first light of sunrise gleaming like a diamond from the windows of the tallest building. There was an expression on his face, no doubt, like that he used to wear when riding off a forward on the Gloverdale field.

It was Saturday. He directed his man to go up town and open up his apartment. The next morning he went for a long walk in the park that from below his own windows stretched its snow-laden trees and open places far away to the west side of the city. Just after the ordinary lunch hour he struck off down Madison Avenue toward the lower street numbers. The winter sun shone brilliantly upon the half-deserted midday stretch of residences, and the scrape of snow-shovels still rasped the softened air of a morning after a storm.

As Jim reached the steps of the house where Edward Bradford had his quarters the wheels of a carriage rolled into the gutter behind him; and upon turning about he realized intuitively that the tall, tired, unshaven individual who stepped down, and after a search of his pockets told the driver to come back for his money Wednesday, was the man he sought.

In spite of a somewhat wilted collar and dust-flecked hat Bradford had, at that moment, the mysterious grace and manner which some men, particularly those thin enough to have their clothes draped rather than

fitted, always keep about them. He, too, seemed to realize that he was the person Jim sought; for, hollow-eyed and unsteady, he gazed back at the large man for a moment and then, having seen him once at some intercollegiate races, he stepped forward.

"I'm delighted to see you, Mr. Cloaker. My wife wrote me," he said. "It was good of you to hunt me out this way." There was a suggestion in his tone of thanks given by a man weak enough to suggest by his manner a personal inferiority.

"Oh, I made a point of it," returned Jim, hiding a momentary feeling of repulsion under the easy, cordial tone of his truthful statement.

Bradford held out a nervous hand. Together the two went up the brownstone steps to the vestibule conspicuous for elegant decorations in bad taste, so characteristic of the American seventies, and now grown shabby. The hallway, dark and silent in the manner of rooming-house hallways, smelled musty. And yet, having ascended, Jim found Bradford's apartments were rather light and pleasant, and a little more luxurious than he had expected. Some books were open, leaves downward on the table, among trays, tobacco-jars, and letters. One of the letters was addressed in a large, feminine hand. Jim probably wondered whether this was Elizabeth's handwriting; he had never seen a line of it before.

"I had only this front room at first," said Bradford. "Met with some business losses, as you know. But,

damn it, a man can't live like a common store clerk!"

Jim nodded half sympathetically, but only said, "You look tired, sir."

"I am," said the other. "But that's all right. We were playing cards, and —"

"I trust you won," Jim interrupted, studying the drawn face that looked so white now against the dark leather of the library chair.

"No," Bradford answered in a lifeless voice, "I lost."

"Suppose, then," Cloaker said simply, "that you and I go out and celebrate. I have just got back to New York. I have called up no one among my acquaintances. The city, with its riches of food, drink, humanity, and adventure, lies below us and before us. You, apparently, have nothing to do. Neither have I. You did not sleep last night. Neither did I. Let us see the eternally changing human comedy out there, with its new scenery, new cast, new songs, and new dances."

Bradford raised himself slowly from the leather cushions. From behind a row of books he drew a sombre bottle of Madeira. "'All is vanity, saith the preacher,'" he quoted, as he poured out two glasses. "I like your suggestion, Cloaker. Everything is about as bad as it could be. Youth is soon gone. I like you for your direct way of making friends. Here's to you."

"I thought so," said Jim to himself. "Day after

to-morrow morning this man may be very ill, but he will like me even more."

This was true. The third evening Bradford's conscience demanded that he go back to his work at last. His mind teemed with pictures of clubs, suppers, and restaurants; with a variety of perfumes in the air and tinkling ice, theatres from in front and from behind the scenes, taxicabs and dog shows, Turkish baths and luxurious rooms in hotels. He was used to cheap trips into dissipation. The extraordinary results produced by such combinations as the Cloaker money and the Cloaker character he had not known before. He consented to go home with him to the extra room in his apartment.

"My doctor told me not to do this. He said my heart was in bad shape," he announced as he crawled into bed.

Jim was thrusting his arm into a pajama sleeve. He looked for a moment at Bradford. "Poor specimen of man," he thought, "and, like so many such, half lovable."

"Bradford," said he aloud, "let's you and I go and take quarters where you won't find your share of the expense too heavy. You'd better drop this insurance business and come to work for the New York office of the Cloaker Iron Works Corporation. You owe money to the other folks and I'll advance it for you. You can pay me. Personally, I think you and I are making poor scores as members of society. Let's agree to have a stupid year. Let's start the game all over."

The other man turned on his pillow, opening his eyes sleepily. "Oh, all right," he said; "I like the whole of your proposition. By the way, I'm married to the best girl in all the world and I ought to do it for her, anyhow." He turned back toward the wall.

Jim walked into the library. It was cold there. The winter wind howled outside. Jim, with the wisdom of a serpent, knew he had opened his campaign in exactly the best way. He walked along the moonbeam on the thick-piled rug. "Damn you," he said, looking back through the door toward the sleeper, "I'll send you back to her — I'll send you back to her a whole man!"

The months that followed brought out characteristics in Jim Cloaker that astounded his friends. Those of them who read this story will at this point recognize him.

He went into business as if it were as keen a sport as polo or shooting Kadiak bear. He worked like a boy from Indiana who has read the lives of Benjamin Franklin and of the modern industrial emperors. Every moment that he was not in his office he spent in the open air in exercise which at times seemed to reach a frenzy of violence. Doubtless at these times he was longing for the old tastes and the old diversions; the sharpest indication of this lay in the fact that he preached physical training to Bradford, calling it "a poor but efficient substitute for the joys of carelessness."

He knocked Bradford into the fireplace of their new apartment when he was teaching him to box. He often

forced him to run all the way uptown from the office, along the river front and with the frequent cries of derision from stevedores and truck drivers sounding from behind. He made the other get into water so cold that it made him red and white, and then he really tore the less rigorous man's skin with a Turkish towel that had knots on it about as hard as the knots on a walnut shell. He insisted on long nights of sleep and that Sundays be spent at the summer home of the Cloakers up the Hudson. He made Bradford settle up for his share of the household expenses every week.

The time came when Bradford broke over. There are only three men in the world who, till now, know how Jim met him when the poor devil came slinking for the first time into the apartment with his white, twitching face, and how Jim went to him and put his arm around him and said: "Poor old Brad! poor old Brad! we've got to buck the line again now. They've thrown us for a loss, haven't they?"

It was not the last time, but Jim seemed to have endless hope, inexhaustible patience. "What shall I tell her?" asked Bradford once, holding up an unopened envelope addressed in the bold handwriting. It had lain on the cigar cabinet for two days during one of Bradford's absences.

"Is that from your wife?" asked Jim, steadily. "I have never been sure as to whether that was her writing."

"THEY'VE THROWN US FOR A LOSS, HAVEN'T THEY."

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"She has never written you?" the other said, not with curiosity, but with surprise.

"No," said Jim. "Just tell her that everything is going to be fine. Say that you have nearly paid off the — the loan the insurance people made you. Tell her that next winter she can come up here. Tell her that she will be responsible for a big victory!"

So, on and on the two men went through the almost unbearable New York summer. As Bradford slid away from his first gathering of strength, Jim, in spite of his fierce interest in his new plaything, the corporation, threw into the game of Bradford's personality an extra measure of persistent and apparently affectionate labor. If Jim's own headstrong, wilful temper ever showed in the progress of slow-coming defeat, he concealed it by long marches into the woods far beyond the sound of the ferry whistles.

At last the fight was at an end. Bradford died.

The doctor had been right. Jim remembered that long before the other man himself had spoken of a disease of his arteries. And now a one last half-foolish evening had closed his career. It was not dramatic. He had fallen over suddenly into the bottom of a hack, and the driver, finding him so when he opened the door, was frightened into a grotesque return to his native Welsh dialect. Jim heard the news over the telephone.

After a time Jim put on his hat and went out. His very first errand was to find a reporter on an evening

paper named Riggs, who had been a friend of Bradford's, and to plan to notify Mrs. Bradford's sister.

"And then," said Jim, "fix the whole thing, will you? You know — the arrangements."

"Aren't you going to be there?" asked the other man, drawing absurd faces on a block of cheap yellow paper with his pencil.

"No," Jim said. "There are reasons why I shouldn't. I'm going on my vacation."

Riggs flushed angrily. "You must have been a real good friend of his!" he said with sarcastic resentment. "This is the most cold-blooded conduct I ever —" He closed his fist.

"Well," said Jim patiently, "I am not sure that he would have liked to hear you talk that way about me." And saying this he turned out into the narrow hallway with its smell of printing-ink and cigarette smoke.

He went away from New York to the Canadian woods. Indeed, it was eight months before he came back. He drove up to the apartment the first day of his return and spent the afternoon in directing his servant, old Jules, in the work of packing up his belongings. The wisps of excelsior already scattered on the rugs in the half-stripped rooms showed that most of the things owned by the other man had been taken by some one who could identify them. She had been there. On the table, among the other personal letters sent up from the office, was one note addressed to Jim in a now famil-

iar handwriting. On the sheet written it merely stated that Mrs. Bradford would make her home for a year or two with her sister in the West Indies. Jim looked at it several times, and turned it over as if he had expected to find something else.

"Of course she couldn't know," he said half aloud. "She has no way of knowing."

Nevertheless, he folded the paper and put it in his pocket; then, drawing a chair toward the window, he rapidly opened and tossed aside a dozen invitations and announcements. Among the other letters was one addressed in a fine, stilted hand.

"My dear Mr. Cloaker," it read, "I am enclosing a copy of a letter received by my sister, Elizabeth Bradford, from her husband. It was written after his physician had told him that his life would not last long, and was held by a friend to be mailed in case he should die. I am not sure what Elizabeth would say to my sending you this letter. I have copied it and enclosed it without her knowledge. Somehow, I thought from all that I could gather that it was best for you to see it."

"The sister with headaches!" said Jim aloud, remembering old Conger's phrase.

The enclosed letter was in Bradford's familiar style.

"My dear wife," it began, "there is little use, after all, because, even though I could do and be all that you

have tried to make me do and be, I could only do it a short while. The doctor said to-day that I must put my affairs in shape.

"I know that it will not be so terrible a blow to you as it would be had I been the right kind of man. I recognize that I have done all the common and some of the extraordinary things which a man may do to lose a woman's respect and love.

"Living with Jim Cloaker had taught me a whole lot about gentlemen and sportsmen. He has fought his way out of all dissipation and idleness in a way to make a whole man stand on his chair and holler! I couldn't do as well. It wasn't in me. I see my father constantly appearing in myself and I have a new sympathy for his tragic life.

"Jim began because of you. I know this is true, though no word of you has ever passed between us. I tell you that I know — perhaps by absorbing the idea day by day from his moods and his inner thoughts — that he thinks you are different from any woman he has known, and yet I know just as you know that he has been too good a sportsman ever to tell you of it. The only comment he ever made about you was that you were playing a great game, and that only the finest of women could play so strong and well. 'Great enough,' he said, 'to make men of twenty derelicts.'

"I believe, too, that you indirectly or perhaps directly were really the cause of all the change in him.

He has been tremendously successful. I have envied his growth. His body and mind both have been trained down. I saw him swim across the lake at Carriten last Sunday. He is as hard as nails and brown with the sun. And it is so with his mind. It is more sinewy, has endurance, control!

"You cannot know how gentle and kind and courageous and true he has been in helping me. I know that if anything happens to me — that when it does — he will seek you out of his own free will. We owe much to him. Perhaps you will want him to help you. He would come. I believe you must know that yourself. It is only fair that, after all he has done, you should let him know, after life has settled back into its ordinary course, just where you are. He may wish to go to you. He would go to you. I suspect that he could not help it."

Jim looked up from the letter and slowly folded it. He sat there a long while until at last his breath seemed to come again and his whole big body relaxed. "He must have known. Old Brad was yellow, but he must have known," he whispered to himself, and walked to the window. There he stood a long time, looking out. After a time he unfolded her brief note. She had sent him word.

He pressed his teeth together. His eyes moistened until her writing had become blurred like something seen through corrugated glass. But now at last she

understood it all — the whole story — he was sure. He could go to her!

He turned back into the room.

Old Jules was straightening his old back above a packing-box. He squinted at Cloaker with his wrinkled old eyes.

"Excuse me, sir," he said, "there's a bit of blood from a cut on your lip, sir."

THE MAN AS WELL

In 1880 Temple, who had been hanging at arm's length to decency, let go. To everybody in the Southern city where he lived and had his friends it was a great surprise. He had been well liked for his big strong body, his quick mind, his laugh, which was as big and hearty as his biceps, and for the clothes he wore. The Temples were an irreproachable race, who had a habit of going north for their wives. So it was the most pleasurable excitement in the world for the sort of people who owned their carriages and who had seen Temple across the oysters and green turtle soup, to be jounced into the realization that he was a drunkard, a rake, and so delinquent a trustee that New Orleans plain-clothes men had sought him after he had disappeared.

What happened to him in the next twenty-one years would not make a pretty story. It would be necessary to tell how he fared on the Pacific Coast and in some tropical islands; of various impolite manners and customs; of the condition he was in when he pulled himself together long enough to organize an enterprise for a planter in South Africa; how he made enough to buy a collar and a passage to Liverpool and then to America: and of how when he saw the Statue of Liberty in New

York Harbor, he burst into tears for the first time in all the years; of the pound of alcohol on his rubbled liver, the careening cargo of sorrow in his heart, and the torment of a half-starved mind.

When he saw his own country's shore again, when he gazed through watery eyes at the marvel of the dream city bathed in the pink light of sundown, he had already lived thousands of unclean years and was fifty-four years old.

These fifty-four years had ridden him hard. He reflected on this as he looked into the cheap mirror of a cheap room in a cheap hotel in lower Sixth Avenue, whose doubtful comforts he had engaged. He had gone to a place where the hallways smelled of cabbage, and elevated trains roared by bedroom windows, with the vague purpose of making the money that remained to him buy the greatest number of brown and yellow drinks for the greatest number of drab and sepia days. And as he looked into the cheap glass, the same evidence appeared against him that had for a long time gone to the jury that sat somewhere in his mind to convict him over and over again unmercifully.

His chest, losing its strength, had slid down into his abdominal cavity; his legs, even though clothed, seemed weak and thin. It was as if the personality of the middle of the man had fed and fattened on the two ends. Fat cheeks, sagging into sacks of transparent skin, had drawn his thickened lips down into red weakness;

but his forehead had pulled taut and had turned the color of a tadpole's belly, twisting his eyebrows and watery eyes upward toward the thin, gray, lifeless hair that straggled down his temples, so that it gave him a peculiar leer. Across the back of his puffy right hand there was a scar, which he often scrutinized carefully as if it were an inscription. As some one had advanced the idea that it was the impression of human teeth, it may indeed have been an inscription. But what difference does it make?

The important thing, and a thing that had nothing to do with his appearance, was that within the passing of his first sixty days in New York there happened to him the most exciting experience in his life.

Within sight of the rolling, trafficking roar of feet, hoofs, and wheels at the juncture of an avenue and Broadway, there stands an old white-faced hotel in and out of whose doors finest gentlemen and smartest ladies were passing a quarter of a century ago. Temple himself had known its corridors, its steaks, and the sound of the squeaky cork beside its tables. With it he associated days of careless abandon, the light laughter of joyous women, the opening of full pocketbooks, moments of spendthrift love for all humanity, fresh cheeks, brilliant dress, well-kept hands, the caress of music wandering through streams of chuckles, murmurs, and exclamations. With Rand Franklin he had been there on the day that a letter with an Illinois

postmark had come to him, telling him that it was all right, that she did consent, and bidding him come to her at once so that they might announce their engagement. And Rand Franklin, who was a witty blade, had laughed funny sentences at him through cigar smoke, and afterward had pressed his hand hard without saying any words at all. Sentiment took old Temple back to this hotel.

Of course, no one there knew him. There had been changes in the office, in the men at the desks, in the waiters, in the decorations on the ceilings. It was not the same old place, from any point of view, that he had subconsciously expected it to be. He waddled toward the door that led into the bar, realizing a little the absurd contrast between the ill-fitting newness of his clothes and the bold dash for fashion made by his neck-tie. He had purchased the latter to gratify a natural inclination to smartness of dress that followed him stealthily long after his means refused it company. Now above the hobnobbing of many bottles and below an oil-painting in green and flesh tints, a festooned bar-mirror gibed at him. He and the mirror both knew that he was a rudderless craft, rigging carried away, deserted, drifting, awash at the bows, ready to nose under the surface, with no one looking on to see the bubbles come up. So he drank down the sinuous, brown, warm liquid, and walked out into the summer sunlight of the side street.

There were rows of old-fashioned brownstone houses on this street; in two or three places white or cream-colored buildings had broken into their severe battalion front, offering to a rank of solemn veterans the usual effronteries of the new recruit. The old houses, too, had suffered such remodelling in their lower parts as to present a long line of little shops — art stores, milliners, interior decorators, confectioners, and the refreshing display of the florist.

Temple sauntered along this row of windows, halted a moment before one of them in which was displayed a water-color of the cool, open sea, and then, as if brought to realization of the sultriness of the day, took off his hat and ran three fat fingers through his gray hair. He drew a long wheezy breath. When he turned to move forward again, a square-sided photographer's display case obstructed his path.

In the side of this case that faced him, arranged upon a background of yellow pongee silk, were brown prints of several portraits. An attractive, white-attired little girl smiled across from one corner toward an old man with a carved ebony cane across his knees, who had been placed in the other. Temple did not see these two, for between them was a picture of a woman.

Temple uttered no cry. To be sure, he stared back into the two eyes that from the photograph looked steadily into his own, with such an expression of amazement that an observer would have believed him mildly

insane. After a time he again snatched off his hat, but still stood there looking and looking, his breath coming wheezily and the drops of perspiration pouring down his cheeks.

The woman looked back at him calmly. She was by no means a young woman, but whatever her years she was beautiful, if beauty lies in the unaffected grace of slender arms and shoulders, in refinement of forehead, in tenderness of eyes and warmth of mouth. Temple forgot for a moment the monstrous evolution that had made his own body a burlesque on his species. Before his eyes was this woman, appearing as the embodiment of all that he had failed to be, and in this moment there came to him the courage to formulate an idea.

It was an idea that he had never before dared to conceive, except in days of drunken frenzy when he had tortured himself with the impossibility of its fulfilment. Now the instinct of self-preservation, which had apparently long ago died out in his prayers for death, brightened his eye. He knew that he had been a hopeless derelict, he knew that only one other human being in the world could give him help, that this being was the woman whose photograph blurred before his eyes. Then still another emotion caught his heart. It shook him so that his straw hat fell from his fingers, and as he started forward dizzily, it nearly sent him sprawling on the sidewalk.

He stopped at the bottom of the long steps that led

from the street toward the photographer's sign. He clenched his hands, working together his nerves, before he ascended to the open door.

Down the perspective of the narrow hall was the reception-room. An anæmic young girl, with red hair arranged in an astonishing pompadour, sat behind a desk, biting a ripe peach which she held in one hand, using the other to catch the dripping juice that with each mouthful fell toward the fashion page of a newspaper spread out before her. She wore a broad white collar about her thin, freckled neck, and a huge blue necktie, as if to indicate that by becoming the photographer's assistant she had dedicated herself to art.

"He ain't here," she said to Temple, drying her lips with a deft movement of her finger-tips. "I'm kinder new here, but if there's anything I kin tell yer —"

"There's a photograph downstairs—" began Temple.

"In the show-case," interrupted the girl, for her manners extended to young men and to ladies with money. Temple fell within neither class.

"Yes, in the show-case," he went on, bowing slightly. "It's in the middle of the top line on the east side."

"What was the number?" she asked, affecting a brisk, business woman's air. "Course you don't know. What about it? I guess I remember the face. I didn't put it there, but I know a lot of the people who come in here." She put her hand into an open cabinet drawer and produced the same picture. It startled

Temple a little, for it was as if two persons exactly alike had been found to exist in the flesh. "That it?" asked the girl, looking at the back. He nodded. "Number 327,589," she said. "That shows how big a business we do. What do you want to know about it?"

"I want to know where she lives — her address," said Temple.

The girl looked at him with unconcealed suspicion. "Do you know the lady?"

"Yes, I do," replied Temple. The girl was searching the pages of an order book. "I knew her twenty years ago. She lived in New Orleans then."

"What was her name?" The girl held a forefinger on a page of the book and smiled in a satisfied way, as if she had won a great triumph in cross-examination. "We ain't allowed to tell the names of show pictures to strangers," she explained.

"Her name was Mary Aldrich Wilson —"

"Huh!" cried the young person. "You do know her, don't you? Mrs. Mary Aldrich Wilson, Farragut Road, Montwell, New Jersey."

He looked at her with widening eyes. "Isn't there a Temple on the end of it?" he exclaimed.

"No, there ain't. It's Mary Aldrich Wilson."

"You've made a mistake," he wheezed. "There ought to be —"

"Who knows best — she or you?"

"Perhaps I do," he said quietly.

"Her son oughter know. He came in here once —" she smiled sheepishly. "I wisht he'd have his picture taken. He's awful good-looking. Didcher know him too? Course you didn't — he ain't much over twenty."

Temple tried to speak; his words gagged him. He finally left the girl, with her blue eyes round with astonishment, and hurried down the steps. He half ran toward Broadway. Puffing and perspiring he went, for in front of him he saw the first light of life that had broken through long, dark years. Thoughts that he had never dared to think before, hopes that he had not dared to picture, love that he had not before had the courage to dream came to him as the material world comes to the consciousness of an awakening sleeper. He was going back to a wonderful world — a world of cleanness, rest, beauty, love, regeneration. The thought possessed the old wreck as a monomania. He was going back to his boy and to his wife!

He sat in a wooden armchair in the empty office of Hotel Mont Blanc, the seventy-five-cent place where he had his room, and rubbed his knees, considering the possibilities. The moderate quiet of the dingy room gave him a chance to fix his eyes on the gaudy druggist's calendar upon the opposite wall so that he might, undisturbed, rake together the rubbish of his mind and make it work for him. He reflected that nothing was to be gained by writing to his wife, then went off into a joyous revel through old memories,

through a thousand little incidents of the past, refreshened and blooming again from the withered bulbs of his brain-cells. Fond dreams were launched out of the past and flew toward the future like so many irresistible projectiles shot from siege-guns. Yet they left him behind them with the problem again on his mind. The afternoon had gone. From somewhere came the click of knives and forks on plates. People were eating dinner. He decided suddenly that he would go to her at once. This was the natural, simple way, elementary, unaffected. And almost at the same moment he was thrown back into a slough of doubts, for there was really little chance that she would consent to his return.

The office was hot. Hot, harsh noises came in from the avenue — the sound of adamant against adamant punctuated by the intermittent cry of the human animal. Temple wiped his forehead and his cheeks. He ran his fingers through his thin, gray hair, which, being wet, clung tightly to his skin; he waddled down the stairs to the saloon below with its trellised street signs. When he came out he was wiping his mouth upon his sleeve; and he plodded away down the side street toward the river, leaden in the dusk, toward the streaks of sunset, toward the New Jersey ferry. He was going to play his last card.

The summer evening had nestled comfortably against the face of the universe when Temple reached Montwell. Farragut Road runs up over the crest of a hill.

At the bottom of it a little girl in short dresses, who carried glowing incense sticks in her hand, pointed out to him where Mrs. Mary Aldrich Wilson lived. He looked up and drew a long breath as if he had been relieved of what had seemed interminable weariness. He had considered the chance that his wife might be away; in the house pointed out by the little girl, lights were shining. He pressed on up the slope with his watery eyes steadily fixed upon that house.

It was an old-fashioned place nestled in a grove of pines; distinction was given it by the fact that the rows of houses on either side were unlighted, deserted neighbors of modern pretensions, of unmellowed newness, of the type designed by an architect who has strong notions of purity of style and cement construction. At the end of its lawn, Temple stopped in the shadow of an elm, where the rays of a sputtering arc-lamp on the summit of the hill might not shine upon him. Far away across the lower ground, the city was winking its thousand little white eyes like a malicious personality trying to shame the milky myriads of stars that lightened the black sky; wisps of night wind, odored with the sleepy exhalation of some late flowering shrub, were assailing the tyranny of the day's heat. All the world seemed unreal to old Temple. He paused for a moment like one who falters along a thoroughfare of dreams.

When he finally stepped beyond the wall of the adja-

cent grounds and out of the shadow of the elm, he saw his wife. She was alone on the porch, comfortable in a wicker chair, and the light from a lower window fell upon her folded hands and upon the foliage of a vine that crawled on the railing. Temple was not so moved by the sight of her as he had been by the sight of her picture. To be sure, he stopped, stiffened, and held his hands tight to his sides, but this was because he had heard a young voice from inside the house, which had called out, "Good night, mother," and because he had seen a shadow in one of the upper windows just before the light went out. He realized that this was the shadow of his own son.

Till that moment he had been blindly following the crude instinct of self-preservation. Now another instinct impelled him to draw back into the shadows and shrink away like one who feels the impudence of knocking on the gates of Paradise. He pressed his knuckles against his teeth as he stood half crouching on the path, and then, straightening with an effort, waddled toward the house, following the grass border with noiseless steps.

He knew enough not to appear suddenly; and, though it took courage, he deliberately moved toward the porch with the light from the lower window upon his fat, shiny face. When he was still many feet away he stopped, turned his open hands toward her, and waited for her recognition with an unblinking presentation of his features.

He half expected that she would faint, or avoid the loss of consciousness by some outcry. She did neither. For a moment she leaned forward toward him; he could hear the wicker chair arms complain in the clutch of her white fingers. He tried to speak her name and failed. She tried to rise and succeeded.

He had concluded that this first moment would decide the questions that lay between them. Instead of this, his wife, standing erect with that extraordinary expression that glorifies the face of every mother in defence of her offspring, pointed above and, measuring off her words, whispered: "He mustn't know. He must never know so long as he lives."

Temple bowed his head. Thereupon his wife reached both arms toward him. He came up the steps painfully, took one of her hands, and pressed it against his face.

"Just look at me," he whispered. "That's all you've got to do — just look at me." He coughed and wheezed the words.

His wife, in a revulsion of feeling, drew her hand away from him; the disgust within her was apparent in her eyes.

"Oh, don't!" Temple mouthed. "It's my last chance. I've come back to you. I'm played out. Don't! I've come back to you — God, Mary, I love you. I've come back to you and my boy." He stepped upon the porch, and she drew back into the shadow of the vines.

So the two stood for a minute. Somewhere in the lower land that stretched out between the silent hill and the winking city in the distance, a park band was accenting the season's two-step. Little scraps of it came to them on the fitful breeze. The wheeze in Temple's throat rose and fell monotonously.

"Come around the corner," said his wife. She pointed above significantly. "He must not hear us." Temple followed her.

"You look so good to me!" he said simply, with his bleary eyes winking. "You're all that's left — all there ever was. Don't you understand?"

"Yes," she answered. "I know. I'm sorry, too. I wish it were possible — but you can't come back. He must never know that you are alive. He must never know his real name."

Temple pressed his clenched hands upon his forehead.

"I'm sorry," she repeated. "It cost me something to leave everything and everybody I cared for. I did it just so that when I had dropped out of the old life and changed the name and come North — yes, and even changed the color of my hair — the baby might grow up without ever being followed by the truth about his father. I knew he must never share the shame nor lack faith in the blood that was in him. I worked for him, brought him up, educated him. He is my boy. He is the finest young man I ever knew. This has been my whole life, and it has been a success!"

Forgetting himself for a moment, Temple looked up at her with his eyes rounded with admiration, as one looks upon the magnificence of the sunset. "Yes, yes," said he. "God! What I threw away!" He walked softly over to a chair, sat down, and wiped his taut forehead with a handkerchief. "I'm something of an outcast," he suggested.

"You must not come back to us — not here. He thinks you died long ago," his wife said tenderly, as if actually speaking of the dead. "He often says you must have been a wonderful man, because if you had not been I should not have loved you."

Temple nodded in the manner of one whose every motion costs a physical pain. "I've just made another mistake," he said. "I suppose it would have been better if I had not come back at all. I was thinking of myself." He scrutinized the backs of his puffy hands. "Just of myself. It seemed to me if I could only just feel your hand on my shoulder for a minute, it would mean rest from all the old nightmares. I kind of thought there might be a chance to get on to my feet again. I realized, too, that I had never really loved any one else, and that I loved you better than I ever did. Oh, well, I just wanted to come back."

His wife groped behind her until she had caught the porch railing; against the dark vines her face and her arms, bare to the elbow, were as white as moonlight.

"You still are very beautiful," said Temple, as if he were talking to himself. "You look very much as you did on Lake Michigan the first summer I saw you. I look different, don't I? And it's funny what I remember about you. I never picture our wedding nor the time you were so desperately ill in Savannah. It's the little things. I remember a quarrel we had about my whipping the terrier pup, and afterward I insisted on buttoning your dress for you — down the back. Then I remember —" He stopped, took out his watch, and looked at the time as if time had suddenly become very important. "I must be going," he announced. "You are right. I'll fight this thing out alone. Coming here was a little insane. I've known enough for twenty years not to do it, and I came —" He caught his breath. "Well, it hasn't done any harm. And it's made a lot of difference to me."

He had bent his head, so he did not see that his wife had come over to him. Suddenly he felt her arm upon his neck and realized that she had dropped to her knees beside him. He heard her say, "I'm so sorry — so sorry," and her voice sounded to him as a voice from the New Testament. His misused body shook, his thumbs pressed into his knees, his throat wheezed forth, in ungainly, awkward grief.

"My!" he said, trying to draw his mouth into a firm line. "My! my! my! We must — I must go. It won't do, I must go."

"I will go with you," she announced softly. "I think it is best. You need me."

Temple raised his hands as if he were about to touch her, but they only hesitated above her shoulders as if they were two distinct, wondering personalities. "This is a miracle!" he cried.

"Just see," she went on. "The boy is strong. He has become a man. You need me. I will go with you. I will help you. I will try to love you again. Perhaps —"

"What about him?" exclaimed Temple. "He would have to know."

"No, no!" she answered. "I have thought of that. I must simply drop out of his life. He will never think evil of me. We will settle that afterward — we will devise some way to comfort him. I will write to him that he need not worry. Oh, I don't know — there'll be some way. I must go with you!"

For a moment old Temple listened to the wisps of band music that came up from the valley. "See here," said he, finally putting his hands upon her shoulders. "All this is unthinkable. You are the only thing in the world I want, but you must not consider this thing." He hesitated, licked his lips, and then went on. "It would mean everything to me. I can't talk about it. But you'd have to give up everything. Look at me. Just see what my body has become. I don't dare to think about my soul. Women like you are not put in

the world to — If you went with me it would mean trouble and suffering and tragedy — it might mean physical pain and disgrace. I'm honest now. It might mean all that — understand. And not a living soul would give you credit for it. Nobody would know. There'd be no reward."

"I will go with you," said she, softly, looking up at him.

Temple burst into tears. And slowly and carefully he put his arms about her and bent down to bury his face in her hair.

At that very instant he heard the sound of a lifted window above the uncovered porch. With inspired quickness of wit he clutched her soft throat in his trembling hands and thrust her over backward as she screamed. There were steps sounding loud on the stairway within the house.

"Listen!" he whispered, kneeling above her. "The boy saw you in my arms. He must never know. I'm the only one who has the right to touch you. Yet he must never know who I am. There is only one way. I am a thief. I tried to take your rings. Do you understand? No matter what happens, he must never know!"

He had spoken swiftly, but his wife understood. "He will kill you!" she cried softly. The screen door around the corner of the porch slammed.

"Do it!" exclaimed old Temple, fiercely. "He must

not know. You're his mother — play this through for him!"

The young man bounded around the corner. He was clad only in his pajamas. The woman raised herself to her knees, gasping. Old Temple struggled to his feet and faced his son. Forgetting his part, he stood looking with filling eyes at the straight, strong figure, the clean-featured young man who was his own and, unlike a criminal caught in the act, he stretched his arms out toward his boy. Then from the woman still on her knees there came choking words: "He struck me. He tried to rob me, Ned!"

She had not finished before the boy feinted at old Temple's body with his left hand and then drove his right up under the older man's groping arms. The blow came with a weight behind it, resounding as it reached between the eyes. Temple went down, his fat carcass rolling, his hands clawing the boards.

The woman gave a shrill cry as if she were the one who had been struck. "No more, Ned!" she cried. "No more, for my sake!"

Her son laughed nervously with the joy of his strength. The older man was still rolling from side to side on the floor in his pain.

"Listen, Ned," cried his mother, clutching at the edge of his coat. "Don't do any more. Let him go. He's an old man. A poor, unfortunate old man. Let him go. Do it for your mother, Ned!"

"I'd telephone — the police — if it wasn't for the —" breathed young Temple. "Are you hurt, mother?"

"No, no, Ned," she cried. "I'm not. Let him go, I say. Don't strike him again. I'm not hurt. He didn't take anything; let him go."

The older man dragged himself up painfully, nursing his face with both his hands. He crawled toward the steps and stumbled down the path with uncertain legs, until he reached the shadow of the elm once more. Then he looked back.

His son stood at full height on the edge of the porch, peering into the darkness; behind the boy, his wife was reeling and clutching at the chairs. Finally Temple saw her stagger backward into one of them, her arms dangling at either side, her body limp. He knew that she had fainted away, and he stumbled forward again down the hill, down Farragut Road to Montwell station. It was not until he was sitting in the dimly lighted passenger coach that he noticed a scrap of lace that had caught on the button of his sleeve. This torn bit of trimming he pressed to his lips and, folding it carefully, put it in his pocket.

The Hotel Mont Blanc was not sleeping at the hour when Temple returned. In the café upstairs the lights were glaring and a piano was thrashing out a popular tune; one could see the white-aproned forms of waiters scurrying here and there.

Temple stood irresolutely on the opposite side of the street, somewhat dreamily gazing up at a young man and a young woman who were sitting at one of the tables in the window. Every time the girl laughed she threw her head forward hysterically, and the immodest plume upon her hat flapped with the movement.

"What do you suppose it all means?" said Temple to himself.

He walked across under the whine and clank of the elevated structure. Once he stopped and looked about. Men and women, lazy with the heat, sauntered listlessly in and out of the street glare. In a tenement doorway a group of shirt-waisted women and shirt-sleeved men squatted close together, jabbering softly like a bundle of sleepy monkeys. A very small child scuffled along the gutter till it saw Temple; then it looked up into his face with strange interest, a derisive quirk at the corners of its mouth, turning its head as it went until its foot caught on the curbstone and it sprawled forward.

"What do you suppose it all means?" asked Temple again. He snapped his fat fingers and pushed his way through the flap-door beneath the trellised beer sign.

Two men sat in the quiet of the back room of the saloon under a dim light and beside a pool-table, draped in black and suggestive of a huge burial casket. One was a cabman, a regular patron whom Temple knew only as "Bill, the Philosopher," the other a particular friend

of O'Brien, who kept the place — a thin, timid creature, who agreed with everybody, the sort of man who twines his limber legs around each other nervously and eternally fingers his over-large celluloid collar. They beckoned to Temple, and he waddled toward them. "Rye and soda," he said laconically, as he passed the barkeeper, who was polishing spigots.

"If I was a believer in faith," remarked the cabman, in a drawl with a slight touch of Irish dialect, "or if I had faith in beliefs —"

"Heh — heh — heh!" cackled the thin creature, choking over his drink.

"If I had faith in beliefs," Bill went on, eying the swelling on Temple's forehead, "I'd say you was a-suffer-in' from the silly idea—the empty error of imagination — that something had given you the divil of a wallop on your mantelpiece."

Temple nodded without smiling. The thin man examined his nails. For a long time the three sat without speaking. The acquaintance had gone far beyond the conversational stage. Temple gazed unwinkingly at a lonely cigar stump on the tiled floor. After a time a remark by the thin man awakened Bill, the Philosopher, to action. "Now, it's this way," he began. Temple did not hear.

"Now, it's this way," said the cabman, dabbling a forefinger in a table-top puddle. He had said the phrase for the fifth time and also "And then again"

as many more. "Am I right?" he asked, with perfect confidence, touching Temple's knee.

"I didn't hear," said Temple, starting suddenly.

"Well, we was havin' an argument —"

"Hole on, Bill," squeaked the thin one; "I ain't said nawthin' agin you."

"We was havin' an argument," Bill repeated, "and I maintained that no one does nothin' good except there's some kind of pay comin'. You can always figger out how there'll be a reward somehow. Ain't it so?"

"No," said Temple, softly. "That ain't so, Bill. I know of one case. I know of one case — sure!" He smiled at them both. There was a tenderness in his smile and voice that neither of them had known could be his.

"There — I'm glad you said so," nodded the thin one, with evident relief. "I kinder thought I was right."

"Sure of your case?" asked Bill, doubtfully. "Weren't there some kind of reward hidden somewheres? Wouldn't somebody know about it?"

"Only me," said Temple, gulping. "It was a woman."

"Ho — ho!" exclaimed Bill. "A woman? Oh, a woman might do it all right. I was thinking of men." It was a lie for his pride.

"Men — a man?" cried Temple, leaning across the

table. He looked into the eyes of Bill, the cabman, and into the narrow eyes of the thin one, as if he might there find words he could read aloud to them. "A man?" he cried.

"Sure," assented Bill.

Suddenly Temple sprang from his chair. "By God!" he whispered. Both of them looked up at him, half afraid. He patted the cabman's shoulder, tore a leaf from a note-book, and raised his hand. "Just a minute," said he, and, sitting down, he wrote: —

"I will go away alone. You have been too good and too brave for me to let you come with me. I love you and know you well. That much I will take with me. I will always try to remember that I am your husband and my boy's father. It came to me suddenly — that I and not you should give up hope."

Temple folded the paper and tucked it into a dirty envelope from which he had shaken a few English newspaper clippings.

"You'll excuse me, gentlemen, if I mail this?" he said.

"Will we order another for you?" asked Bill, the cabman, doubtfully.

"No," said old Temple, smiling at them out of his watery eyes. "I've had my last. I'll just say good-by. I'm off to Liverpool to-morrow."

"That a fact?" said Bill, reaching out a hand that set in motion a whiff of stable. The thin one untwined

his legs. "Good-by," said he. "Keep on the water-wagon."

"Oh, I'm on for good," wheezed Temple. "Good luck." So he left them.

After two days, he drank again. Nothing else was to be expected. In fact, many months later he died on a Liverpool wharf late at night, with four men trying to hold him down while he did it. Two of the four were sailors and two were roustabouts — an unfitting company for him. They found a little leather bag on his throat with a bit of lace in it, and one of the sailormen stole it because he believed it would reveal buried treasure.

"THEY WAS WOMEN"

CATCHAWINK COVE is a small pebble pocket on the coast. Since the Government has dredged the channel into South Bay it is no longer used as a harbor by the little fleet of single-rigged fishing craft. The skeleton of a brawny-ribbed schooner that came over the Butternut Shoal in 1898 and groaned all night against the rocks on the Point while the natives took off the crew still lies in her last berth. In 1898 old man Cameron, with his forefingers calloused with fifty-nine years of running cod line, and his mouth squared with fifty-nine years of God-fearing and honesty, still kept his mooring and lobster wharf in the Cove; the next year he died, and his son John, who had been tripping the Banks, came over to live in the single wind- and sleet-whipped little dwelling on the Neck. Wives and dwellings follow each other as men's possessions, both fore and aft, and John Cameron did not long smoke his evening pipe beneath the gnarled and writhing apple tree before the door alone. He married Martha Norman of the village, and she was six feet tall and weighed one hundred and eighty pounds without fat, and her skin was as soft and brown and clear as a tanned baby's, and her mouth

was red. The men said there were no dogfish in John Cameron's net.

A year after he married and took his wife into the dwelling on the bleak cliffs of Catchawink Neck, Fielding Henry, who was a fashionable New York architect and prided himself a little on having tired of summer hotels and summer colonies, bought a piece of land beyond the stone wall, which in its broken line bounded the old Cameron holdings, and put up an ideal little place, artistically perfect and affected. Henry brought to this summer home his bride of that spring. She had come from a good old New England family with the respectability of many generations of large and extremely conservative investments — a most admirable race, determined with great conscientiousness to be democratic and trustees of many charitable institutions. Her name had become Eleanor Henry, and she was tall and white and apparently very frail, and her lips were thin.

The Henry couple brought two maids and five trunks, and in a few days Martha and John Cameron came over to call on them. It was a straightforward piece of business, the fulfilment of a time-worn and dignified custom, nowhere more flavored with kindly neighborliness than in out-of-the-way parts of New England. The Camerons were very sure of their ground, the Henrys a little embarrassed. The latter were somewhat surprised to find how high the intellectual strata

of the former ran. But after the good old formality was over it was the Henrys who laughed and called the incident picturesque.

"Nevertheless," said Fielding Henry, filling his narrow lungs with the breath of the sea and then lighting a fresh cigarette, "the woman is remarkable. What a figure, what a forehead! She has the face of a Madonna and the health of an Amazon. Shoulders! I wish that I was fit to immortalize her on a canvas!"

"It is a bit too coarsely grained a type to please me," answered his wife with conviction. "The fault I should find with your ideas of perfection is that they are not consistent with the form and type of human being that has proved superior. Peasant beauty —"

"Not peasant beauty, Eleanor," interrupted Fielding, putting his hand upon hers. "The fisherman's wife apparently has brains as well as mere brawn. My idea of fine womanhood includes health, strength, and physical courage, as well as the more delicate and refined traits."

They had been married just long enough to reach the extremity of sensitiveness. Eleanor, all flimsy with white and mist-dampened drapery, rose softly and went into the house. From her room above the porch she watched a single bobbing light in the limitless depths of night sky and sea and the creep of the white fog above the rhythmic churn of the ocean on the outer rocks. Then, having filled herself with the intense mood of the

hushed evening, she lit a lamp and looked at herself in the glass, holding the light in front of her. Her face seemed longer, sadder, and paler than ever. Even a deep breath would not make her shoulders broad and full, and her hands that held the lamp seemed more than ever delicately bloodless. Without reasoning much about it she cried.

The next morning, with the brisk breeze brushing the fringed white caps of the water and the sunlight sharpening the colors of the hollyhocks before the door of the fisherman's cottage, Eleanor remembered her weakness of the evening and bit her lip, covertly, with mortification. Moods and emotions were not approved by the race from which she had her inheritance of well-poised living and cool thinking. She was quite normal again. No deeper feeling than that of vexation for the stupidity of the maid who waited on the breakfast table possessed her. She noticed, however, with a slight touch of pity, the great clumsiness of the hands that brought the smoking coffee, the low forehead, and the dull, stupid stare of the immigrant who looked toward her hopelessly for inspiration of grace in service. It was difficult to believe that the maid and she were of the same species; she reflected with subconscious satisfaction that Martha Cameron stood about halfway between herself and her surprised-eyed servant.

In their days together spent upon the water, in their early morning plunges into the flood tide, in their

walks at dusk through the soft-scented heather, Eleanor found with Fielding the keenest happiness of her life. But the influence upon her of nature with its strange shifts from solemnity to gayety, from misty quiet to the tumult of wind, rain, rocks, and sea, for the first time outbalanced the influence of humanity. Strange moods drifted in like afternoon fogs; the sense of solitude and inexplicable sadness came and went in alternation with high flights of joyous exaltation in the smallest detail of beauty in the wild world about her. Reality became a dream, and above all, in the passing of the summer days, there recurred again and again the curious fear of some terror hanging above, unknown, nameless, and powerful enough to end her happiness. Though Eleanor knew it not, the ratchet upon her wound-up personality had slipped; the blood of ancestors that kneeled and beat their heads on the gravel at sunrise was asserting itself.

The Henrys returned the call of the Camerons. Even though long trained to the manners and customs of metropolitan life, they became moment by moment enthralled by the deeper sincerity of the fisherman's little home. The last slanting rays of the sun lit up the vista of dining room with its red-clothed table, behind the little parlor, and the neat, well-scrubbed kitchen one door farther in the perspective. A ship's clock ticked and belled the half hours on the wall, and one side of the room bore testimony to the lifetime of a

manual laborer and a gentlemen; old Cameron had collected with slow and sure delight a library of wholesome content. The engravings in their dingy gilt frames were mildewed, but in age and execution and subject lent a quiet dignity to the room. Whatever spirit of selfish interest in the picturesque and humble home had prompted Eleanor's call was soon dispelled by a half wistful contemplation of the Camerons' hearthside.

The young fisherman, when asked by the architect about his plans, spoke with his natural laconic manner, but without affectation, of his ambitions, of his wish to buy four schooners he had in mind with the purpose of becoming the proprietor of a growing salting industry, and recounted with some spirit the story of a steering gear lost in a winter blizzard a mile due east of Boone Island Light. Martha told the Henrys of old traditions and legends that clung about a coast of many wrecks, storms, fogs, phantom ships, Indian burying grounds, and witches' graves.

Cameron was not so much at ease as his wife; sailing by the north star during long turns at the wheel in solitude and meditation makes no conversationalist.

"I've got the biggest lobster caught around here this two years," he announced. Eleanor was all interest; Fielding seized upon the excuse to smoke, and so the four went down the rocks in the fading light to the wharf, its barnacled piles and lapping, wriggle-

shadowed waters. Martha, strong-limbed and brown, jumped down from the boards to the pebbly beach, rolled back the sleeves from her arms, with the muscles playing under the tautness of the print cloth between the shoulders, drew a dory up the slope till she could reach into a barrel of water in the boat and deftly lift out the prize. A scowl came upon Eleanor's white brow. Martha gave a little gasping laugh with the pure animal joy in the exertion, and at that moment Eleanor caught her husband's eyes moving from Martha to her own slim figure. It suggested a comparison. They had been married just long enough to reach the extremity of sensitiveness.

The next day Martha picked blueberries, and before lunch time she had emptied them out into two pails with another neighborly idea in her mind. She put on a clean neckerchief and started out briskly, through the sunlit downs, toward the Henrys' green roof that showed above the rise of ground and the broken stone wall that followed the ridge. The Henrys had just returned from a run in their automobile, and Fielding, having put the machine in its shelter, was going back to the porch, where Eleanor was perched in happy ease on the rail.

He stopped to look as he saw the coming figure descend into the hollow, and his wife observed him. He threw himself into a chair, but for several minutes silently watched the seas breaking on Butternut Shoal;

then he studied Eleanor with a slight scowl at his brows. She met his gaze.

"Do you think this place agrees with you?" he asked tenderly.

"Agrees with me?" questioned his wife, jumping down. "What a strange question. I am not an invalid. I have never been an invalid."

"No, but you are not strong," said he, with some hesitation.

"You never have brought your attention to it before."

"No, but lately—" he stopped, for a strange new look had come into her eyes. There was a second's pause. Eleanor, in whom primitive instincts had been awakened on Catchawink Neck, wondered for a moment if it were jealousy, and then, knowing it was not, realized that it was the fear of not continuing satisfactory and sufficient to Fielding's eyes. Anger drew the chords of her fingers; to compare her with the fisherman's wife seemed outrageous.

"Really, Fielding," she said quietly, "tell me when you last saw your Madonna and Amazon?"

"Just now," he answered without giving any sign that he had observed her mild irony.

"Then you have simply been using her as a standard for comparison." It was said in the manner of an accusation.

"I hardly think that's a fair way to put it," he re-

turned. "Of course I realize that she is a splendid type of wholesome beauty. I wish all American women were like her." He would have said more, but Eleanor interrupted.

"I disagree with you absolutely," said she, in a cold voice. "I will not discuss the matter with you or give you my reasons, for it is a matter of education and taste. Beauty and health are not abstract things. Real beauty is merely the outward sign of other things which ought to be admired in women — gentleness and courage. And health too. Health is only another word for efficiency. The fisherman's wife is not a type which has proved by its characteristics to be wholesomely beautiful. Her muscles are merely the coarser sort that fail in a great stress. It is not a type that has proved itself fit. I should think you would wish for a fine fibre rather than a coarse fibre. What would you think if I had rather looked upon a fat foreign-born hotel porter than upon my brother Richard, and wished Richard to be like him? The fisherman's wife is the type that has proved unfit — the coarse type. She is not the sort that will bear the test of courage, or nerve and sinew."

Eleanor had spoken as she thought she believed; she had spoken slowly and carefully and flattered herself she had shown no heat and had been conscientious. Fielding was a good fellow. He did not answer. She walked into the house and in a minute more came out

with an affectionate smile to announce that lunch was waiting for them.

But Martha Cameron with her pail of blueberries had stopped at the corner of the porch when she had heard her name, and having also unavoidably heard what followed she now had set off again toward home through the bay bushes and golden-rod. She still carried what she had intended as a gift. The emotions that possessed her were interpreted to her, first by her own slow step and the motion that she made when twice she brushed her eyes with the back of her brown hand and, secondly, by the fact that she later found herself walking briskly, and with a set jaw.

Loving a world of huge-heartedness and hating hate, Martha did not permit herself the luxury of unfolding her thoughts on Eleanor, the metropolitan type, to her husband, but the sunlight of the week was less bright to her, the peace of dusk upon the evening waters less peaceful. Song sparrows sang in the tangle of weeds between the two dwellings undisturbed.

It so happened that lightning struck a villa that had been designed by Fielding Henry for an Adirondack summering millionnaire, and a telegram called the architect to his New York office to see that the plans for a restoration of the burnt wing were without fault; at the same time an unexpected run of mackerel, a steady breeze and overcast sky, started John Cameron away in his fat-sided sloop with two dories on the

decks, a seine beneath the hatch, and two men and an oil cook stove in the cabin.

One of Martha's girl friends, who had succeeded Martha as village librarian, drove out for her in the afternoon when her trained eye had seen the Cameron fishing sloop beating out beyond the whistling buoy; Mrs. Henry was sitting on her own porch when they passed and nodded above her novel. The lizard green of her dress and the red back of the book appeared to Martha to be a studied effect; she also nodded and made such a quick turn of her head in the opposite direction that Eleanor looked up again, uncertain whether the appearance of coolness was intentional.

The middle afternoon came with a droop of the wind; the sun was obscured in the muddy wash of the sky, the sea writhed lazily like gray oil. Eleanor put down her book. Occasional flitters of sunlight whitened the rocks at the point; two schooners grazed like cows in the calm, nosing toward harbor with sails dejected. There was loneliness in it all. It was saddening to watch the wave of the seaweed in half tide as it washed about the granite boulders. Eleanor wished that Fielding would return.

The change of wind came from the northeast with a chill and the fluttering smell of the open ocean; the horizon dimmed with black clouds and black water and later was lost in a chaos of streaky darkness, out of which came wind flurries that raked foam off the surface of the sea.

The poppies in the dooryard began to nod vigorously toward the house. Fine rain drove Eleanor indoors.

Just before supper the sound of wagon wheels raised a faint hope that Fielding had come back, but through the sweep of the storm she could see that it was only the fisherman's wife returning. The harbor was in torment; even through the wind and sheeted rain she could see the white-frothed tumbling of long breaking seas. Two little black spots — vacant moorings — danced with anxiety for craft that were riding out the gale in the open.

At nine o'clock, when the wind screamed by and Eleanor was seeking comfort under the glow of a lamp, the stupid maid stole into the room with great, round, fearing eyes.

"The cook would like to know if ye think we're safe, ma'am," said she.

Eleanor laughed. "Of course we are," she hastened to say.

Still the maid did not go back. "Ain't it awful, ma'am?" she asked with her dull, wondering stare. "The cook thinks she heard a witch's scream."

"Nonsense, Katie," replied Eleanor, and yet she found the nameless fear of the superstitious servant was contagious.

The maid peered about the room helplessly. "May I sit down wid you a minute, ma'am?"

Eleanor did not answer, but, laying her embroidery

on the table, went to the window. In lulls of the rain drive she could see an uncertain square of light in the fisherman's cottage; once it seemed to her that she saw a human figure pass in front of this single gleam in the darkness.

"It's an awful feeling, ma'am," suggested Kate.

Eleanor looked up quickly. The hair that bristles on a dog's back in an uncanny moment and the fear of an ignorant and stupid human creature are both terrifying, because it seems that nature to make up for the lack of reasoning powers has endowed the dog and the dullard with unerring instinct of danger. "What feeling?" asked Eleanor, nervously.

"The feelin' that something's going to happen," said the maid, backing softly into a chair.

A minute later after human silence and the dull roar of wind and seas, awkward, clumping steps sounded on the porch and the brass knocker beat at the panels before the heavy door opened and a figure entered with the vicious inrush of air and rain. It was a relief to see that it was Martha Cameron. She was in overalls. Her eyes were shining, her red lips pressed hard; her breath came quickly, and the water dripped to the polished floor from her outspread, clenched hands.

"What's the matter?" cried Eleanor.

"A vessel — Lobster Trap Reef — pounding, pounding to pieces. She'll be gone — gone in another thirty minutes!"

"THEY'VE FIRED A REVOLVER TWICE!"

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Without regard for her delicate silk gown, the architect's wife opened the door once more and tried to see.

"There! — there!" cried Martha, leaning forward with a pointing arm. "They've fired a revolver twice. Not a gun — a revolver, John hasn't got one, thank God! — Little sharp crack! You can't see. Your eye isn't trained. Look down the path of the squalls!"

"It's all black, black night to me," said Eleanor, trying to hold down the flimsy fabric of her skirt. "Can't anything be done for them?" She retreated to the door.

"Yes — go take 'em off — a dory —" Martha bent close to Eleanor's ear. "We —"

"Women?" cried the other with a gasp.

She was still gazing hopelessly into the tumult of thrashing darkness, her hands at her throat.

"There ain't men here," screamed Martha. "Not within a mile. We raise women here that'll go when there ain't men." She reëntered the house.

"You'd go out — there!" Eleanor's face turned white under the hall light.

"Alone — if I've got to," said Martha. "There ain't a second to lose. Two'd stand a better chance. I couldn't keep the dory pointed up alone." She met Eleanor's frightened eyes squarely. "I'm goin' to get 'em somehow!"

Katie the maid stood staring at the fisherman's wife

with her wondering round eyes. "I'll go wid you, ma'am," said she, and burst into tears.

The mistress turned toward the ignorant servant, who was shaking and helpless, with a new understanding of humanity.

"I want a woman," said Martha, without a tremor, "that has a fine fibre. A woman who has beauty with something behind it! I want a woman from a class that has proved itself fit! Am I going alone?"

Eleanor looked up quickly and with sudden understanding.

"No — you're going with me!" she said, her eyes ablaze.

Martha flung open the door, and the two passed out and were gulped down in the darkness. As Eleanor looked back, with a sentence of prayer upon her lips, she could see Katie stumbling out after them into the storm.

"Follow close," shouted Martha into her ear as they ploughed on. The scrub growth tore her skirt into shreds; the wind ripped her hair loose, and falling in wet strands it slapped about her neck. "The rocks!" shouted Martha. Above them shone the filmed light in the fisherman's cottage; below, there was a jumble of broken ledges and the roar and hiss of violent water. Clinging to the broken rock, they descended, and Eleanor could see they stood under the uncertain dark outline of the wharf. They reached the steps above

the high-tide mark and stumbled upon the narrow little pier. Eleanor was first conscious of the fact that one of her slippers was gone; that she had not noticed it before filled her with a warm, exultant joy. She walked dizzily along the narrow shaking boards following closely the dim figure that swayed on before her.

The other's voice suddenly came from below her. "Climb down." She became conscious of the dim outlines of a dory that rose and fell, coming up near her, descending from her, shooting forward with the drive of the surf, snapping back at the extremity of taut rope. Without hesitation she threw herself down on the boards and over the edge at arm's-length until, when the bottom of the boat, rising, touched her feet, she let go and dropped.

"When I cast loose," screamed Martha, "row for all that's in you. Keep your head. If you don't, we'll drift back into the breakers and swamp her. Keep her nose into the wind. Take the other seat. Each of us at an oar. Understand?"

"Yes." Eleanor turned her back to the wind and silently defied the white boiling of the sea on the shore. And yet as Martha cast off and the dory jumped back on the crest of a wave, pitching down to the gunwale, she felt the chill of wild terror.

"Now," screamed Martha. Their oars caught the water — once, twice, three times, and it seemed to

Eleanor that they were pulling through a flow of sodden sand. The dory hesitated, turned athwart the gale, rolled drunkenly, nosed again and answered the strain of their arms by climbing the next liquid hill, and squatting on its stern it slid into the trough. A sense of mastery comforted Eleanor; her fingers cramped themselves about the oar. In her brain swung the rhythm of the stroke. The dark bulk of the wharf, the white thrash of shore water, disappeared; but the light in the cottage still shone out winking mistily.

"Lobster Trap Reef," shouted Martha. "Keep the light where it is now. Shorter stroke like this. Pull — pull — pull!"

Behind them, riding the wind, Eleanor thought she heard the little bark of a revolver, and for a moment she forgot the agony of muscles that tore at her forearms behind her shoulders, and burnt around her waist-line. She felt the slow separation of mind and body when human flesh and sinew, set to their task and enduring, go on at their work alone, leaving the mind free of the stress for many minutes at a time, before the will is obliged to return to whip the muscles back to mechanical service.

Climbing mountainous crests which Eleanor did not dare to turn and see towering above her, with infinite labor, then descending with a slap of the dory's bottom into the valleys of the sea, they made their wake, lost

in the toss of water as soon as it left the stern. A comber with a blooming ridge curved to swallow them, and its upper jaw with white fangs dropped over them with a vicious snap. The dory staggered. Eleanor was thrown from her seat into the water that rushed foaming out of the plunging stern. She clung to her oar desperately and clawed her way back.

"Good!" shouted Martha, bailing with a free hand. "It nearly swamped us!" A wall of tempest and a downward plunge shut out the light on the shore; Eleanor's head swam. This was a nightmare of eternal seas, eternal pain, eternal tumult. Her arms still fought on.

She met the reality again with Martha's voice close to her ear. "Look!" it shouted.

They were riding astride a wave; astern she saw the black humped back of Lobster Trap Reef, with leaping froth hurdling and the swaying form of a little craft wedged in the outer rocks. A sea broke over it; the sound of ripping timber came to them in a wind lull.

"Hold her nose into the breeze," cried Martha. "Listen! There's scarcely a chance of taking 'em off there. We'd go up on the rocks, too. She's breakin' up. Hear that!"

"What are we here for?"

Martha reached forward and gripped Eleanor's arm. "All right! Listen!" she said as the dory lifted again on the next wave. "Hold water when I say. We've

got to turn quick. We'll spill if we don't get around before the next one gets us. Then catch the other's stern as we go by her. Make it on the back of a sea. Hold her back till you can grab somethin'. If we miss her, there's no chance. Do you hear?"

"Yes," replied Eleanor, and, dropping her oar into the seethe, put a knee against the end of it. The dory rolled, dipped, and then righted under Martha's stroke and leaped before the wind. On the second sea they dug in their blades, both impelled by the instinct of a crucial moment, and the dory shot thirty yards toward the seethe of water at the reef.

"Back water!" shrieked Martha. "We'll make it on the next one!"

Again they swung up with the boat's nose sniffing leeward on the crest, and then shot into a tangle of seas and a caldron of foam. The spray blinded Eleanor, but she felt the shock as they carromed on the stem of the sloop, and dragging in her oar she groped wildly for anything she could reach. It was with grim satisfaction that she felt her hand close on the sheet rope, parted and fouled with the rudder-post beneath the surface.

Between the seas she caught a snap sight of the wrecked boat, broken in the middle; the upper half of the mast dangling through the shredded sail and jabbing viciously at the rocks. Clinging to the upper gunwale with a hand and hooked forearm lay a man

whose head jerked loosely back and forth as the boat shifted. It made Eleanor turn sick to see the wagging of the head. Then the dory plunged and the rope bit into her wrist.

On the next sea Martha sprang aboard; the painter was in her teeth, and catlike she scrambled along till her fingers had found something to which to make it fast.

"Don't let go," she shouted to Eleanor, "or you'll swing out and tear loose!" and Eleanor, nodding, saw dark trickles running from her own wrist and tightened her grip. The boom, swinging with its débris, swept by her, caught the loose folds of her gown and stripped the waist from her body.

She saw Martha feel of the man's bare neck and then pull him forward along the rising gunwale toward the smaller craft, that chafed to be loose and banged, creaking, against the little vessel's side. The man rolled over the edge into the bottom of the dory, groaned, and, clutching at the seats, sat up.

"By God! they're women," he shouted thickly, and his head wagged again. Another sea raised them up, and Eleanor's arm, pinned to the sheathing of the sloop by the straining rope, bent slowly with the fall of the water. Martha heard it snap. She saw it fall helpless from the loosened sheet rope. She uttered a despairing cry. Then Eleanor's other arm, bare to the shoulder, shot across for a new hold. Martha's staring eyes were

near it. It was thin and white, but not so deathly white as the hand that gripped the rope — the hand she saw for a second as she clung to the thwart — a hand of thin tapering fingers and jewelled rings — a metropolitan hand.

The dory sprang back toward the vessel's side, and Martha, seeing that it would grind the broken arm, thrust her own, cheerfully, into the closing space. Hers was rounded and tougher. She stood the shock with a wince. Her bosom was pressed to the gunwale, and her own eyes came close to Eleanor's and looked into them. Then she threw herself into the dory, scrambled over the man to the bow, and, with a bait knife she had picked up on the way, sawed through the vibrating painter.

With her good hand free, Eleanor at the other end of the boat, keen with instinct, grabbed her oar, and bearing it under her arm like a lance thrust through the churn and spray of a breaking sea against the vessel's side. The dory shot out into the foam, shipped water, and darted like a loosened animal toward the end of the reef. They saw the wave that chased behind them, felt its lift, were conscious of having cleared the end of the reef and left a roar of seas and the sharp screech of ripping wood behind. In front of them lay the muddy chaos of wind, rain, and water. Eleanor believed that she saw the distant shore light — a pinhole in the black fabric. Then she fell forward over her oar,

and her hair floated in the swash at the bottom of the dory.

The man, struck with her loosened oar, groaned and lifted himself.

"Keep fore and aft to the seas," cried Martha.

"By God, they're women!" exclaimed the man again as if suddenly awakened from a dream. He pushed Eleanor back into the stern and fell into her seat with the oar in his hands.

"Row!" screamed Martha in his ear. "Row! I can't have no harm come to *her!*"

Wind-driven, they reached the shore below the lights in Henry's cottage and dragged the dory, filled with the breaking surf, on to the little pebbly beach. Martha lifted the other woman out of the boat with her own arms; it seemed a very light and frail burden. Panting, they dragged her up the ascent, and Katie, with her great stupid, fearing eyes, met them at the door.

It was Martha who laid her on the bed, where a trickle of blood soaked out into a large bright crimson circle, and Martha who turned her this way and that, slapping her back, her thin neck, and her bare shoulders with the bits of eel-grass still clinging, their green upon the whiteness of the skin. The man stood ready to lend his aid. He was looking dully out of the window into the storm, which still beat on the glass.

When Martha's great brown hands had kneaded and slapped her circulation back to life, Eleanor opened her

eyes. She blinked at the dim light of the lamp, at the unshaven, unkempt, unknown fisherman with his torn shirt and bare chest, at Katie, who mopped her red eyes with a handkerchief and rocked to and fro with her mourning. Then, turning at Martha's little cry of joy, she sighed comfortably, and, reaching up with her unbroken arm, drew Martha's head down to her. "You look *beautiful* to me," she said, and kissed the fisherman's wife upon the lips.

"By God!" said the man, hoarsely, shaking his head from side to side. "It beats me. They was two women. By God!"

THE STORY OF GEORGE BOND

THE tale had no ghost, no horror, no mystery or problem in it. It was told where we could smell the wetness of the seaweed, which the tide was leaving on the beach, and see the wink of Cape Powder revolving light along the gilt edge of the trundling fog, which pillowed backward from the moonlight. The place was no more fitted for the story than the teller. She was a matter-of-fact person, it seemed, who in reading history would take the greatest pains to learn the dates — merely some one who invites politeness and possibly a little pity. Her name is of no consequence and easily forgotten; no one remembers whether she was Miss or Mrs., which was more vital. In a way, it was simple enough, almost a melodrama of simplicity! Substantially —

There was a man somewhere who used to sit month after month immovable in his chair, looking out across the variability of the seas with the most remarkably clear eyes — immovable in his body, but with all his vitality in his blue eyes.

He had been through Annapolis, where the system was a song to him; he ate discipline, swam in rules and

regulations, and took the training like a blotter. Inactivity was a shrunken shirt to him. No one bettered him. He nailed down the greater part that a sea fighter can know the way a carpenter lays Georgia pine, and he never let his man break through. When he came out he was six feet two, with a back the width of a Smyrna rug. Some one said he could crack pecans in the bend of his elbow. The world was two sizes too small to suit his fancy. Dropping forever over the edge of the horizon was the next best thing to complete happiness. Complete happiness was the chance to put his life into making the navy an inexpressible superlative of perfect power, half man and half iron. Unsurpassable flesh tuned unsurpassably to an unsurpassable reticence of steel was his poetry.

The navy bellowed short-handed at his coming; one of its ships had swayed down into the bottom of Havana Harbor, officers were cutting themselves when they shaved in the morning, and the men could be caught at any time patting the fat, sleek sides of somniferous eight-inchers, playing possum. The navy needed him as they needed the other hundreds; those who had the greatest faith in him said it needed him even more.

Into the lazy, drooping tropics he went with the rest, a dance in his eyes. There were weeks of basking off jungle-skirted shores, the fleet being like so many sniffling sharks brooding in the sunlight. At night the

fat-topped water slid away from the vessels into a mysterious nothing of darkness beyond which at any moment there might lie some frantic, joyful stress. The ensigns and middies were promising each other wild, exultant happenings. But George Bond put tooth on tooth and promised to himself silently.

The anticipation was feeble in comparison to the reality. The miracle of the fight was not only the pounce of one squadron upon another, the spit and roar, the sinews bulging from men's necks, the yawning of the sea, closing its jaws upon metallic cities; to Bond the true marvel was that man's mind could live so long or know so much. To be where he stood was to fulfil his mission on earth, as if he were some insect for the microscope whose normal life is being measured by the seconds.

It took life several months to get back into measured tread. Then came more tropic places and brown, barefoot islands, with hatched dwellings and swishing palms. The shore and the doctor claimed Bond. He cursed at sick leave, cursed at motionless days, cursed the writhing of the malarial torment that flung him back into his delirium Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. The disease stripped him, his big frame became gaunt, he felt like a dismantled cruiser, and cried out in the agony of staying still. The pendulum of malaria would not let him go, and his mind thrashed on like a pile-driver shaking itself to pieces over emptiness.

Finally quinine with its ear-ringing persistence drove the ghastly swing of the disease back far enough so that he might fare out in a tame, gunless craft to touch his own soil once more. People whom he had never seen before knew him; in the Department his name was no longer a meaningless word on the lists; in the navy hotel, behind the Golden Gate, officers who had never seen him spoke nicely of him, and those who had wrote to him pleasantly. He had taken his trial trip, and had made two knots over specifications. The next thing was to go on and on, loving and loving the navy and being a part of it, screaming when the navy slacked its own pace or held him back from the tugging of his ambition. His mind forgot its own dwelling.

Bond's great frame, filling out little by little, became saturated with a new mystery — the puzzle of rheumatism. One morning he closed his fingers upon the bed-sheet with a groan of pain, a week later he could not close them at all — in a month two specialists had gone to their wits' ends, and he swung between crutches. "Exceedingly curious — most virulent form — exceedingly curious," said the wise man. A year showed that several hot springs and massage treatments equally accomplished nothing.

Bond's mind was as practical as it was eager. With every wrench of the pain he reflected more, with every new inroad of the stinging, paralyzing conqueror he read treatises upon the disease with feverish interest,

becoming an authority almost as capable as those whom he summoned to the side of his wheel chair. He recognized the end of the fight when he had come to the end of the list of all sane methods of combat.

"No one really knows the disease, its cause or its cure," said the expert, dropping his voice as if imparting a confidence; "I know about as much as any one. After all, it is very little."

"It's lucky I have no relatives," replied Bond, carelessly. "When will I go?"

"Oh, not for some years yet," said the doctor, as if that were good news. "You ought to be safe till it gets the heart."

"It's going to play with me like a cat playing with a mouse," said Bond, suddenly, for the first and last time in his life looking bent and beaten, bulldozed and bitter. "Well, let her play!" His blue eyes kindled as they had on the coast of Cuba. Their brightness was only quenched. But this is where the real story begins. Persons who are not blood-moored or have not had an actual berth somewhere in the harbor of a man's soul are perfectly forgivable if they forget. Bond remembered the navy and loved it and loved it, and although he knew every movement, every improvement, every commission, promotion, or death, and although his pay still came to him in the honor of his retirement, yet the navy as a many-sided personality most pardonably let him slip out of its mind. The rigidity of his body

used to distress strangers, the fact that his knees were set into crooks as inflexible as marble produced a most painful expression on the faces of those who sympathized with him so unnecessarily, and braved their own shudders to approach him. It almost seemed a duty not to haunt the cross-road places with his great stiff body, and the tragedy of the wheel-chair and his ruddy, wholesome face and his clear blue eyes. And, therefore, with what the doctors had left, he bought himself a little old farmhouse by the sea, since the sea attracted him, and the greatest diversion of life was its variability, its color, its wind-flicked blue or its oily gray, its triumphs of clear weather, its mysteries of fog, the eternal cloud patterns and whimsical tide streaks, its limitless store of vital aroma, its million-fold noises of wind and water.

The farmhouse was a cozy place, with the usual picturesque whiteness of aged country dwellings in New England, where one may still find a moss-rose or two growing in the garden, and sunflowers do not seem out of place. Vine-covered, the porch welcomed the morning sun and afforded a pleasant afternoon shade; it was broad enough to avoid a complete invasion of winter snows and seemed to invite the curiosity of summer winds. To its wholesome quiet George Bond made the retreat of his useless body. Whether his mind followed or whether it still flung itself abroad in dreams of creative activity, no one ever knew. Day after day he sat

motionless, looking with his blue eyes out across the variability of the seas. His face was still powerful, weathered, and wholesome; his fingers, his arms, his legs, his sides were still upon him, free from serious deformity, but they no longer knew their names.

An old woman who had appeared from somewhere, neat and gray-haired, taciturn but kindly, did his cooking and housework. The only other member of his strange household was the trained nurse who moved him indoors and out, turned the simple machinery that lifted him on to his bed with a painful squeak of cogwheels, read to him occasionally, or sat watching him with an empty, absent-minded stare. The trained nurse was merely a part of the unreasoning campaign for his life. Several came and went. One was young, fresh, and pretty; one was profession-worn and overwise, one was pathetic, timid, and unhappy, as if by a set determination. Bond good-naturedly wished them well and tried to entertain them; he knew that it must be lonesome for them by his side. In the summer a few of the cottagers on the Point came in to see him, but the occasions were always embarrassing except for the one instance of a frivolous young girl who had a brother in the navy, and came to Bond to have him tell her just where the brother was, and who was his commanding officer, and whether his vessel was a lucky ship, and how many guns she carried, and hear the tales he told with his cheeks reddening, which she

said were "simply great!" In the winter, neighbors from down the road, out of the goodness of their hearts, brought him glasses of beach-plum jelly and fled from him in a panic of excuses. It must have been rather dull for the nurses, he thought, and as he seemed to be a dismal failure as an entertainer, they came and went with the turn of time. Mary Cranston was the only one who stayed.

She was not overwise, pathetic, or pretty. What she had been through in the past she never revealed; some of it showed on her face. Rather older in years than young Bond, she was ending the reportoire of human emotions. Bond had only played the leading part in one, and was now playing the second; the rest, among which love was important, but improbable, were so unknown to him that he could not tell whether they were comedies or tragedies. He grew very fond of Miss Cranston in a week, and no one knew why, not even he. Till the end he never loved her.

But she was the first who saw some acropolis in his soul which others failed to see, and although she was too tall, and beaten too thin, to be pleasant to look upon, there was much comfort in her companionship. She looked upon his immobility with a brave eye, smiled wholesomely upon him, and appeared to him peacefully contented as she sat near him in the long summer days under the shade of the vines, knitting upon some garment of mystery. Her hands were large without

being unwomanly; there was a fascination in watching her fingers.

The curiosity attending the progress of this slow-growing fabric was not unpleasant to Bond, and he teased himself with its miniature excitement like a child who looks with bated breath at an array of bundles hidden in a closet before Christmas. He seldom asked questions. But one brilliant morning in October, when the sea twinkled with whitecaps, he asked her about it directly.

"Why, it's going to be a sort of sweater that can be put on like a coat," said she.

"Who is it for?"

"It's for you," she replied simply, putting it down into the hollow of her lap.

"I never see you working on things for other people," he said, without any sign of thankfulness or pleasure.

"There aren't any." Her voice indicated no sentiment, it was merely a statement of fact. "I have few friends."

Bond thought of this and wondered how she came to be so much alone; he was sorry for her, and afterward, when the Department sent him some interesting volumes of reports, the consideration of Miss Cranston left his mind. It was not until the dry leaves were scratching across the porch at night, and the first snow lay in patches above the tide-marks, that she beat her way back into his interest. Breakfast had been

brought to him outdoors, where, in spite of the warm circle of sunlight, the sharp air whisked the steam from the surface of his cocoa. Mary fed him as usual.

"You don't look very well," he said.

"I am very happy and contented," she answered.

"You are!" cried Bond in sudden wonder. "In this dull place! I thought you would soon be going, like the others."

"No, no," said she, "I have never been so happy for years. It is not tiresome here. It is peaceful."

"The others always explained they wanted to get back where there were theatres and street-cars and people and noises and electric lights!"

She faced the salt breeze and the open expanse of the sea. "I think I would like to stay here forever," she said.

Bond did not see that he could say anything in reply to that; there was no reason why she should not stay so long as the disease did not climb up and catch his heart. After a moment, during which his glance travelled from her hands to her rather thick lips and thin nose and brown eyes, he spoke to her for the first time with real sympathy.

"You look tired," he said. "Are you sleeping well?"

"Last night I slept but little — I was thinking."

"What about?" he asked.

She looked steadily into his eyes, trembling a little. "I was thinking whether I would speak of this or not.

But I will tell you — I wish that you would make me your wife."

The words caused little outward effect upon Bond, for even though emotions play about the mouth and in the eyes, one expects the body to do something, and Bond's body never did. Several times he started to speak. At last he said: "Roll me over where I can get the sun, and come back in an hour or so. That's a good girl."

When she returned to him he was still looking out across the lead gray of the water. "See here, Miss Cranston," he said. "Without answering you in any other way, it's too plain that you have no right to tie yourself down that way. Besides, I'm fond of you, but I don't love you. I'm very, very fond of you, but I don't believe I'd love any girl. That's lucky for all of us."

"You don't understand," she answered.

"Well, no, I don't believe I do. I've often told you that what property I have will go to the last nurse who's with me. There is nothing to prevent your staying till then, and so I know there must be other reasons. I don't believe you love me either."

She shook her head solemnly.

"So I believe that you are doing it for unselfishness," he went on at last — "for me."

Her eyes filled with tears. "What a fool I am!" she said, drawing her sleeve across them.

"It isn't right," Bond said. "Of course, it won't do. You're too young. It would make you unhappy. Don't you see that it wouldn't ever do?"

"But it would do! I would be so happy if I could always take care of you, and be near you — that is if you wanted me. And it would be home for me. I can hardly ever remember having a home. And to be some happiness for some one else."

"It's home for you now," he interrupted kindly, "and you can always stay here."

"Oh, can't you see?" she cried, jumping to her feet. "It is so different!"

At that moment he wished he could move his fingers so that he might put them upon her hand, which rested on the railing.

"Let's wait awhile," he said, smiling. "By and by, after a few days, you'll see when you think about it that you need more courage than that which makes you willing to give up everything out there now." He indicated the outside world with a motion of his eyes.

"I must tell you about myself," she said softly, "before —"

"No," cried he, vehemently. "What difference do you think that makes to me!"

In the days that followed Bond never failed to return constantly to the attack upon her inclination. He failed to bend it, and failing, admired her the more. If he, at the bottom of his heart, was indifferent on his

own account, he never said so, and therefore left unused the one bit of information which would have driven the possibilities from her mind. Perhaps his new intimacy with Miss Cranston made him more and more comfortable and happy with her; it seemed to her that he did not sit so many hours gazing at the tumult of his mental pictures.

"It means so much to me," she said to him after several weeks had gone by. "I've done so little good. And now it's a great big chance once more. It would make me so happy."

"Are you sure of that?" said Bond, slowly.

She did not answer.

"If it's for me, I won't have it," he added, almost savagely. "I'm fond of you, Mary, but it wouldn't do."

Nevertheless, one day he called to the minister, who was driving by in a thaw, with the runners of his shaky old sleigh shrieking over the bare places in the road.

"Good afternoon," answered the other, leaping out and picking his way up the path.

"I just wanted you to tell the people around here that Miss Cranston and I are going to get married in a week or so. That doesn't mean they're invited. What day can you come around?"

The young parson was somewhat startled at Bond's terse announcement and simple plans, but Mary Cranston was quietly radiant with her promise of new life.

All that week Bond could hear her singing to herself as she went about, and he was happier himself.

They never talked about their coming marriage, but Mary seemed contented to plan wonderful things for the house and the restoration of the old garden.

"I suppose there will be some one you'll want to write to," he suggested, with an unpleasant idea suddenly entering his head.

"I will write for you, of course," she said, putting her work on the chair and getting up; "there is nobody as far as I am concerned."

"Sit down," said he, laconically.

The marriage ceremony took place in the parlor beneath a steel engraving of the Battle of Trafalgar, upon which Bond kept his eyes steadily fixed. Mary Cranston stood beside his chair and drew a deep, painful breath when the minister placed the ring upon her finger. Her hand was touching the motionless fingers of her husband. The old housekeeper with red, bleary eyes was the only witness. It afterward occurred to Bond that it was a good deal more like an enlistment than a wedding.

The marriage made no difference in the mode of life at the old farmhouse. Bond still sat motionless on the porch, gazing out across the variability of the sea. Mary Cranston still lifted him from his chair to his bed with a squeaking of cog-wheels, and was no longer paid a weekly salary for doing this sort of thing. The only

difference was the increased number of visitors. Some of the village folk were sure that Mrs. Bond was a great heroine, others attributed to her a mercenary motive; all came to see her in a most neighborly spirit. When summer had warmed the days, the story of the Bonds was chatted among the holiday-seekers at the Point as a pretty romance, and those who knew made their horses walk as they drove by the door.

Bond was very fond of his wife, but he was not in love with her. She was quieting and silent. More and more silent she became.

The improvements about the house which she had planned were made, and she seemed to have exhausted this resource of pleasure.

They said little to one another, not only because Mary had talked herself to her extremity, but because her husband's mind was somewhere else — perhaps cruising far out on an ocean of phantom activity.

Sometimes after wordless hours she would say, "George, what are you looking at with those blue eyes of yours? What are you thinking about?"

The answer never varied. "I was wondering when my carcass would let go of me," he would reply, without any trace of bitterness or sorrow. She often wondered if that were the whole unexpurgated truth.

As the weather grew warmer during the second spring, when the nips of green began to poke out of the brown places, and there came a luxurious, faltering wind,

saturated with sunlight, Mary's spirit writhed and stretched as if it were awakening like a hibernated lizard.

She found herself longing to hear the booming of the city or sniff the odor of cooking, not as it floated from the farmhouse chimney, redolent with birch bark, but the smell of the gas stove, the griddle cake, and the greasy chop that floated out into the noisy streets from some café. Old pictures haunted her, old voices whispered in her ear. She reflected that the old associations, at least of places, were wholesome enough, and it could do her no harm to return to them for a day or two.

She presented the matter to her husband with the simple statement that she would like to go away for a week if he could be contented with a hired nurse for that space of time.

"Go ahead," said Bond; "it will do you a lot of good."

It did not appear, however, that he was right in his opinion; on her return Mary showed indications of a new delight in personal adornment. During the peaceful months of her married life her taste had gradually settled into a rut of extremely neat severity; now she took particular delight in a becoming brown hat, a lorgnette chain with amethysts, and a belt of new style which was particularly suited to the thinness of her waist.

All of these were purchases of her visit. Bond did

not ask her where she had been or what she had done; he seemed genuinely pleased that she was delighted with her new things, and tried to turn his chair so that he could see her when she first appeared in her new spring suit.

"The nurse was a nuisance," said he, "but you had a good time, and I think that's a good thing. You ought to go away oftener."

Life at the farmhouse did not change its tune. It began to seem to Mary to be the distressing reiteration of an inharmonious toy music-box, the crank of which some child turns with fiendish patience. New mornings came without newness, days crawled toward dusk, and rolled up during the night to unroll again to-morrow, like the to-and-fro sliding of a faded panorama.

One day she went to Bond, sitting motionless in his chair, gazing out across the sea, and, walking around where she could look into his blue eyes, she said very clearly and distinctly: "I cannot stand it any longer, I must go away. The monotony and quiet is fearful, this musty house is fearful. It is a living hell here, and I am going away. I have packed up already. The garden and people here are dreadful. It is something awful to watch you looking and looking out there all the time, and there's nothing there for you to look at. I am sorry. Truly, I am sorry."

"Oh, that's all right," said he, "when will you come back?"

"I'm not coming back."

"For God's sake!" He leaned his head back as far as it would go on the sort of neck he had, and winked his eyes at the sunlight and the pain. "Go in and do what you want to," he said finally. "Pack some more or whatever you want to do and come back in an hour or so."

When she returned it was obvious she had been crying. Her face seemed younger than ever before, but nevertheless wore a look of mature doggedness.

"It's awful, awful, awful!" she cried, covering her eyes with her hands. "I am so sorry. It's wicked to do it."

"No, it isn't," said Bond, coolly. "Sit down over there. It isn't wicked. It's natural. It's just what most people would do. I'm partly to blame. I never realized before how terrible it must be for you here. I remember I spoke of it beforehand, but it went out of my mind since. I don't see how you stood it so long."

"It would be wicked enough even if you were an ordinary man, but —"

"Hold on," interrupted Bond. "Don't get on that subject. Leave me out of it. Let's just look at it from your point of view; let me tell you how I faced the same thing."

"The same thing!" she repeated.

"A question of courage," he explained. "I used to think of a hero the way most people do. Something

on the spur of the moment, and dash — a call for volunteers to jump down the gullet of death, and the answer. That's the sort of courage or heroism, or whatever you call it, that I used to have. Nearly everybody's got it. It's what made you willing to be my wife. I've always known it, Mary."

She shut her hands tightly and looked straight into his eyes.

"I don't think so much of that sort of hero as I used to. Generally he doesn't have time to think of what he's doing, or else there is a band playing and people shouting and flags waving and medals clinking and rows and rows of eyes and newspaper reporters. I could have made a great hero in that class. So could you. Sometimes it seems as if that was the kind that everybody admired the most. It's as tame as a transport. It's the cheap kind. It hasn't got the real stuff in it."

"Don't say that, George," cried his wife. "Why do you say so?"

"Because I know now that the real hero can't have the chance to shout out 'I'll do it!' where everybody will hear. It's the wives of no-good men and such folks that are the real ones. Who hollers for them, who gives a damn? They don't get hero-crazy at any supreme moment. The whole of life is supreme with them. It was cheap courage that made me jam my elbow into a launch engine to save a seaman's fingers, but when

I didn't shoot myself before my fingers stiffened so I couldn't, that took some of the real stuff. The navy's forgotten me, but they've got to remember I didn't, and if some other poor devil gets where I am he'll remember that I stuck it out!"

"Don't, George," she exclaimed; "it's too terrible."

"No, it isn't — it's all there is in life for me. I'm dying the way I ought to die, and no yelps. I'm sticking it out. Who sees? What do I care who sees? There aren't any cheers for me. What do I care? If I die right, somebody'll remember it. You'll remember it."

"Oh, don't — please don't — don't go on," she sobbed.

For a moment he was still. When he spoke again his voice was more tender than she had ever heard it.

"You see, it doesn't make much difference to me. But there's these village people, for instance. Some of 'em are helped out a good deal by thinking, 'Now, there's Mary Bond; just see what a good woman she is; why, she's a heroine'; and then the others are saying, 'You can't expect too much of people. There aren't any angels in this world. Even Mary Bond will leave when she finds out what she's undertaken — you see if she don't.' It's for them you've got to stick it out. When you made your first sacrifice it wasn't anything compared to this. This is your big chance. There won't be any cheers for you, or flags flying or memorial

IT THREW HIM ACROSS THE RAILING, HIS FACE BURIED AMONG THE VINES.

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tablets. Hardly anybody will notice it. But it's the real stuff. It's your real chance."

She came to him quickly, putting her arms about him. "You are wonderful — a man," she cried. "I love you, I love you, I love you," and for the first time she kissed him upon his lips.

So it happened that she stayed until there came a day when the disease climbed up and caught George Bond as he was sitting motionless, looking out across the water. It caught him by the heart and threw him forward across the railing, with his face buried among the vines.

That was the story. So it was told in substance. It has been told here again, not because it was an elaborate tale, but rather because of George Bond, and because it only seems fair to him that many should know rather than only a few.

THE DECENT AVERAGE

At three o'clock in the morning a man in a light gray paddock coat turned the corner of the narrow street and approached the unwinking electric sign over the door of Poillon's Turkish Bath. From the brighter and livelier thoroughfare, with its resounding clatter of cab horses' feet and drone of electric cars there followed a half dozen individuals, some overdressed, others in threadbare, shiny garments; two were dirty; one had a long white beard, which gave him a benevolent appearance; one smoked a cigarette, which drooped from one corner of his mouth as he talked out of the other; another was thickset and bull-necked like a stunted giant. All of them whined along at his heels, taking turns at hypocritical and shameless solos of pleading. He shook his head doggedly.

Having reached the top step of the flight that led to the entrance to the baths, he turned on them all. "Go to blazes!" he shouted in a thick voice. "You buzzards!"

The old man with the ministerial beard and watery muskrat eyes poked his face up behind the heavy shoulder of the thick-set man and answered for them all. "You're a cheap skate all right," he squealed.

"All that money to the good and no hand-out to your friends."

"Friends!" yelled the man. "I've got good and full of friendship — I have!" He coughed drunkenly. "Friends! I've got one for every dollar in my pants. That's the kind of friends I've got!"

He took something from his pocket and tossed it down the steps. The silent half dozen gave vent to animal cries. They pushed, scrambled, fought, dropped to their knees in the gutter with groping, clawing arms, panting, lustful. The youth of the cigarette succeeded in grasping the object; he staggered to his feet. Uncontrolled, the bull-necked individual rushed at him with eyes red with sudden passion, caught him by the two ears, and shook him savagely. "Share up!" he roared with an oath. The youth gave vent to a wail. "Leggo!" he whimpered. "It ain't money." He opened his hand. The object for which they had been struggling was a champagne cork.

"Money," said the man on the steps, philosophically, with alcoholic hoarseness. "Money, money, money, money." He tipped his hat on to the back of his head with the tips of his fingers. "Gee, ain't it a joke?" said he, and opened the door.

The smell of newly laundered towels, steam, and bay rum scented the office, where a clock ticked above a counter on which lay a register with a pen across its autographed leaves. A foreign-looking manager dozed

in the enclosure behind, and a yellow-haired girl was reading feverishly from a volume of poetry bound in brown limp leather, which was open on her manicure table. She looked up, noted the stranger contemptuously, and spoke in a shrill voice: "Mr. Sutro!" The manager started up, rubbed each eye with a fat forefinger, and opened first one and then the other to meet the bleary gaze of the man across the counter.

"Gorrect," said he without courtesy. "Sign here."

Taking the pen, the patron of the baths wrote "John Nixon" in a large, untrained scrawl.

"Any valuables, chewels — eh?" asked Mr. Sutro, offering an empty lock-box out of a cabinet.

"Yep," answered Mr. Nixon. He drew a diamond pin from his tie and unscrewed a flashing stud from his shirt. From the side pocket of his trousers he pulled handful after handful of wrinkled, crumpled bills. Their green and yellow backs mingled in a pleasant combination of color. He stuffed them into the box. Mr. Sutro pulled the register toward him quickly and studied the stranger's signature; then he regarded the pile of money with silly, childish envy.

"Perhaps we'd better pud et in de safe for you, Mr. Nixon," said he, deferentially. He pulled open the top of a glass cigar-case. "Chust took a cigar, sir" he went on. "I'll count this over if you don't mind."

"Give me a receipt for it," said Nixon, reaching into the cigar-boxes.

Mr. Sutro counted the bills with a wet thumb; it took him several minutes. "Two thousand eight hundred and thirty-one," he announced. The girl behind the volume of poetry was gazing upon the money with unwinking eyes. As the manager stepped toward the safe, she rose to come forward with an affected little dab of her hand to her stray yellow locks. She leaned her head a little to one side and smiled encouragingly at Nixon. "I'm on duty till seven-thirty," said she, archly. "You'll stop to be manicured as you go out, eh?"

"Oh, sure," said Nixon, poising his cigar to watch the smoke curl upward. The girl looked disappointed. He had spoken so plainly a refusal.

"Garrying quite a leetle change around?" ventured Mr. Sutro, in an attempt to be amusing.

"Oh, sure," replied Nixon in a tired voice, tossing the cigar to the floor. "Lost two hundred this morning," he explained good-naturedly. "Ten to one picked on the ponies this afternoon, and the rest off the tables this evening." He looked up at the life insurance calendar. "Must be lucky date — October 13." His shaky hand was on the door to the dressing-rooms.

"Let us know if you vant anything, Mr. Nixon," called out Sutro. The girl leaned forward over the counter. "Don't forget, now!" she cautioned, shaking a round, white finger at him.

"Money?" said he, half aloud, lapsing into his

drunken world under the influence of the warmth of the inner air. "Money? Gosh! What a joke!"

The porcelain-tiled hot-room, with its sheeted reclining chairs about the walls, its red rug and table littered with newspapers, already contained four men when Nixon had undressed and descended to its swinging door. He noted this with satisfaction, for he liked the easy sociability of a hot-room, which, had he been well versed in the analysis of human manners, he would have known proceeded from the instinctive democracy that arises when unclad man meets his naked fellow.

Six months in the great city had made him familiar with metropolitan types, but having only a simple mind he found himself at a loss to quickly classify the clothesless men inside. The lack of raiment swept away distinctions.

He was the only one who showed the enlarged hands, the bent and muscular back, knotted forearms, and undeveloped legs of a man who has been from childhood a manual laborer. The youngest of them all was a square-jawed youth with beautifully proportioned limbs still in the soft moulded lines of boyhood; the oldest was a paunched and ponderous gentleman with a fine high forehead, which was distended in symmetrical spots as if it bent outward with the vigor of an internal intellect fretting at its bounds. The corners of his mouth expressed a weakness and his hands a refine-

ment which together explained why he had come to Poillon's instead of going to the bath at his club where others of his own world might be surprised at his flushed skin, his hard breathing, and vibrating finger-tips. A third man, who was notably thin, spoke of "making Troy on Thursday," which proclaimed him a commercial traveller. His sparsely clad bones protruded ludicrously at every corner of his frame, but he was not the man to laugh at, since the wrinkles at the corners of his eyes and the patient droop of his mouth showed that he knew humanity well and loved it much. In the next chair sat a common human being.

John Nixon shuffled across the room leisurely toward another unoccupied chair.

"Well," said the commercial traveller, "here we all are again."

The youth smiled. The oldest man put down his magazine to look solemnly at the speaker. "That's fine cynicism," said he, after a moment. "You talk like one corpse addressing another in a graveyard."

"Cheer up," put in the common human being. "We're going to be here for a while together. We might as well make it pleasant. To-morrow we've got to chase the filthy lucre once more."

"Money," mumbled Nixon. "Money, money, money."

The others laughed at the look upon his face.

"Yes, siree — money," rattled the commercial trav-

eller. "I guess I need it as much as anybody. This little racket has brought me down to hardpan. We all need it in our business!"

"And in our play," added the youth, assertively.

Nixon snapped his fingers among superior intellects. He had found this the easiest way to attract attention. "That ain't so," said he, with conviction. "Money is hell."

"You don't want to give any away, do you?" asked the youth, sarcastically. "My desk at college is covered with bills that are yelling for it."

Nixon looked from one to the other of the company.

"I've got nearly three thousand in bills upstairs in the safe," said he. "It's what's left of seventy-five thousand that come to me last March. And in this room here — to-night — I'm going to give it away."

For a moment there was a strained silence and four pairs of open eyes; then the commercial traveller laughed.

"Say," he bantered. "What brand of cigarettes do you smoke?"

"Get out!" said Nixon. "I'm sober all right. I mean it."

"Let's hear his story," said the oldest man, smoothing his thin gray hair judiciously. "There'll be plenty of takers if he's in earnest."

"Seven months ago, gents, I ran a cold steel tack machine for eighteen dollars a week in a factory just

outside Buffalo," said Nixon, nodding toward the oldest man. "I'll tell this to pass away the time, see?"

"Go ahead," urged the college youth, clasping his bare knees. "This is rich."

"I ain't no hand to tell a yarn," Nixon went on. "But I used to work hard, see? It had been like that for thirty years. I don't look forty, do I? There'd come times when I'd wish I had money a-plenty. I uster look out the factory window on to the lake and wish I had enough so I could live high-stepping and knock off work for a time. Now there was my wife, she was different. She'd sing and rattle dishes in the kitchen and never want any better. It just suited her.

"There come along a feller one day as went into the office and asked to see me. Said how he was a lawyer. And they called me down into the office, and the feller says: 'Is your name John Nixon?' and I says 'Yes,' and he says, 'Do you remember your uncle, Ted Nixon?' Says I, 'I never seen him — he went West when I was a kid.' 'Well,' says he, 'he struck oil in Texas, and I'm sorry to tell you he's passed out of this life,' says he, 'and left you seventy-five thousand dollars of his estate,' he says. 'Holy Smoke,' says I, pulling off my jumper. 'Wait till I get my coat,' I says.

"To get my money I had to come down to the city here. That night we struck town. The next day I had my cash — all good and hunky in the bank, except what

I kept out to have a fling. The first thing I did was to get a-talkin' with a cabman. He showed me a saloon where an oil painting hung over the tables. It was an all right picture, too. A feller in there told me it cost a thousand dollars. I was feeling good, and people was looking at me thumbing off bills to treat the crowd. So I bought the picture just to be smart, and paid for it in cash right there. There was hayseed in my hair all right. And Lord, how everybody loved me when they saw my roll."

"Been here ever since?" asked the commercial traveller.

"Ever since," answered Nixon. "Health gone, money going, half a man and half a sport. Gents, let me tell yer — that's the kind of slave I've been. Gee, how I wish I was back at eighteen dollars a week and hearing them tacks snippin' out of that machine and droppin' down into the boxes, pretty, new, and shiny."

He cast a reflective glance at his biceps. An attendant opened the door and deftly swung a tray of metal cups into the room. "Ice water?" he asked, glancing up at the thermometer. The common human being reached for a cup, gulping down its contents, spilled a few drops on his leg and drew it up, shivering. "My stars," said he. "I'd hate the monotony of a machine like that."

"I uster, too," replied Nixon. "I kind of got the idea I was pretty much abused, see? I joined a labor

union. We thought we was slaves of the company we worked for. Slaves! Gee. Money beats any company you ever see. I've got all over the notion that I was unhappy then. It's a heap of satisfaction to see something being made—seeing the wire go into one end and the tacks poppin' out at the other and fillin' box after box."

"Poetry?" remarked the commercial traveller, with some irony.

"You ain't far wrong," replied Nixon, solemnly. "I was a sight happier, anyhow. I guess the fun you get out of money fades away pretty dog-gone quick — like the money. I don't wish for nothing better than to get back right where I was. Down here in New York all they want is money. Everybody's a buzzard a-swoopin' around waitin' for another buzzard to get weak so's they can peck his eyes out and eat him. And as for friends — Gosh! I have had experience in them lines. Lord! What they'll tell you about horses and sure things while you treat 'em to champagne and cigars is a caution for snakes. All I want is to get so blamed far away from this city I'll never get back in a lifetime and," here his voice rose to an excited shout, "be poor again, everlastingly, blamed-edged poor! I don't want to see the darned electric lights on Broadway or smell them Egyptian cigarettes; I don't want to ride in cabs, or see daylight from the wrong end. Gents, I'm through. I want to go broke."

The oldest man laughed. "You seem to have rather a bad impression of New York. Now I take it that the rest of us here are New Yorkers." He looked around, and each man nodded except the college youth who said: "Mine — when I'm at home." The oldest man met Nixon's gaze with a bluffing stare of superiority. "Do you think we are buzzards?" he said impressively.

"Beggin' pardon, gents," said Nixon, honestly and without fear. "You can't help it. You've growed right to it. You don't see nothin' but dollar signs. You love money and I hate it, see? I'm going back to the old-time John Nixon on the tack machine. I've got my dose of money — and what you buy with it — good and plenty, and when I go back I'll be satisfied right to the brim — when I go back — busted!"

"Well, I'll be thundered!" exclaimed the college youth.

"It can't very well be the same," remarked the common human being, wiping the glistening perspiration off his face with his towel. "You probably can't go back to your old place. Your wife —"

"God! if I could only go back to her!" cried Nixon, his hardened palms spread out awkwardly. "But the jig is up on that. I'm tainted with the damned money. They've told her how I've done down here. I put off lettin' her hear from me until I was afraid to write to her. Oh, that's all off!"

The oldest man looked in dismay at Nixon's coarse

face, which was stretched into a distortion of lines as if he were suffering a terrible physical pain.

"What sort of a woman is she?" asked the oldest man.

"A homely woman," replied Nixon. He said it with such tenderness and love, with such regret and sorrow, that every other man in the room lifted his head as if proud of his sex.

"She was all right," mumbled Nixon. "There ain't no better. Gee — !" He rubbed his spare thighs reflectively. "She didn't use no perfume," he added, as if to give a final touch to his crude picture of her, something which would bestow upon her a rare distinction and dignity.

The commercial traveller saw at once what he meant. "By George!" said he, with brisk sympathy. "I for one think she'd be glad to have you come back."

"Me!" cried Nixon in grim derision.

"He deserted her," said the college youth, innocently brutal and nodding toward Nixon. "She knows the whole story. But I'm not sure either," he added, as if his knowledge of mankind was profound.

The oldest man made a gesture toward the bony commercial traveller. "I like your faith, sir," he said unaffectedly. "I remember of betting on my college baseball team even when it used to lose. This is like it. You're backing humanity because it belongs to you."

"What was your college, sir," asked the youth soberly.

The oldest man smiled, but did not answer, for reasons of his own.

"Women of the right sort will stand an awful lot," announced the common human being, much impressed with the weighty truth of his own words. "I have lots of faith in women. I think she'd be glad."

"See here!" cried Nixon, who had been leaning far forward so that he might, by catching every word, assist his thick intellect. "Ain't it right for her to throw me over? Wouldn't she be a fool to take me back?"

"Bosh!" the oldest man ejaculated. "The Almighty God arranges all that."

"Just the same, my goose is cooked," Nixon said doggedly. "I've chucked all my happiness with her into the river. Do you think I'd ever chance it? Why, I'd bet my last cent she wouldn't even see me."

"If I had any money—" began the commercial traveller.

"Make it a pool," suggested the oldest man with interest. "Her own husband ought to know her best, but he has described her pretty well in a way. He's made her real to all of us. I'm gambling she'll take him back."

"I'll take that side of it," said the common human being.

"Me too," said the college youth.

"I'm afraid I'm out," laughed the commercial traveller. "Unless," he went on, "a watch and a seal ring will go at a valuation. I might as well take a chance."

Nixon stood up before the table. "There's two thousand eight hundred in the safe upstairs," said he, with a little twisting smile. "I'd like to see it covered, gents. But I can't take any checks. Watches and rings are all right. Checks don't go."

The oldest man scowled. "Oh, what's the use?" said he, in the manner of one who is accustomed to unlimited credit. "I'll take checks from any of these others and give you one for the whole amount. I'll have the proprietor of the place put his endorsement on mine. You'd take that, wouldn't you?"

"That's good," assented Nixon, "if you want to trust the others. Having money has made me a little dainty about checks, gents."

The oldest man arose and opened the swinging door. "Come here, Hans," he shouted to a sleepy attendant sitting on the platform of the weighing machine. "Go find Mr. Poillon and ask him to give me a check for two thousand eight hundred. Mention my name. If he hasn't got that much in the bank, ask him to get a check from his brother to make up the amount. Wake him up, if it is necessary."

"See here," he went on, addressing the nude figures inside the room. "We are a nice crowd. How are we going to settle this bet before morning?"

The others looked at each other and laughed. "Fun's all over," said the common human being.

"Hold on," the commercial traveller said. "There is a way. Where does she live?"

"Last I heard she'd gone back to Elmira to her aunt — Sadie Dutton," Nixon answered.

"The telephone," suggested the commercial traveller.

The oldest man nodded gravely, as if it had been an idea of his own.

"Some difficulty in finding Sadie Dutton of Elmira," the common human being remarked, "to say nothing more."

"I don't believe they've got a 'phone," put in Nixon, dully. "I don't know the street, either."

"Leave it to me," said the commercial traveller, not without conceit. "If I don't do it in an hour, bets are off. See, there's a plug hole for a telephone instrument on the wall, there."

"Is that agreeable, gentlemen?" asked the oldest man, with an admiring sweep of his hand toward the commercial traveller. They nodded. "Where are your contributions to the 'she'll be glad to have him back' end of the purse?" he inquired.

"Watch and ring — about a hundred dollars," said the commercial traveller, laconically.

"Give you a check for two hundred," said the youth.

"I guess we won't let you in, my son," replied the oldest man, in the manner of a careful parent.

"I'm a son—but not yours," growled the young man, flushing angrily. "And besides," he added in an apologetic tone, "I have a ridiculously large allowance from my family."

"Well, go get your check then," said the oldest man.

"Five hundred has to be my limit," the common human being announced. "This is a pretty stiff stake all right!" he added.

"Oh, I forgot to say, gents," Nixon remarked from his chair with some bravado, "I'm going odds of two to one on this."

"That leaves me seven hundred dollars to put in on my own account." The oldest man did not change his expression. "Hans," he cried out the door. "Hold on a minute, I only need fourteen hundred. Get a telephone down here, understand?"

"And tell Mr. What's-his-name in the office to bring down my money," shouted Nixon to the attendant.

"Things are getting interesting," said the common human being, taking a deep breath with his hands pressed against his chest. "There is a decidedly refreshing novelty, eh?"

"Unexpected pleasure," assented the college youth, who had returned. The commercial traveller regarded the muscular grace of the youngster with envious eyes as the latter strolled over to his chair.

"I must take up physical culture," said he.

No one advised against this. The common human

being was looking reflectively at the ceiling. Nixon, with his hands gripping the chair, was staring with unseeing eyes at the floor. "We'd better have this room cooled off a little," said the oldest man, kneading the rolls of fat which made his trunk look like a pile of doughnuts. "It'll kill a man to stay in here another hour."

No one answered. The attendant returned after a while with a telephone set with dangling green cords and a brass plug attached; a white slip of paper was held in the fingers of his other hand and a bundle of bills, luxuriously thick and green was pressed beneath his arm.

"Give it to me," said the commercial traveller, reaching for the nickel instrument. The attendant handed the check to the oldest man. "Mr. Poillon says you are very welcome, Mr. —— "

"Brown," interrupted the oldest man, sharply.

The commercial traveller glanced at the clock. "It's now five minutes of four, gentlemen," said he, retiring with the instrument to his chair. "We can now get down to business."

"Suppose you get her on the 'phone," said the common human being, "what's going to be your form of question?"

Nixon stood up, shifting his feet nervously. He had been counting his money, and now he threw it in a pile on the table. "Just say you are a friend of John Nixon, that all his money has gone, and will she let him come back to her."

"That's fair enough," put in the oldest man.

"Wait!" exclaimed the college youth. "It ain't fair to us to tell her his money is all gone."

"You'll know women better when you're older," snapped the oldest man. "Most of 'em will forgive a man in hard luck when they wouldn't listen to him at all if he was having everything his own way."

The youth reclined once more in his chair, a little conscious that he would know the world better later on. Taking down the receiver with an air of confidence, the commercial traveller waited for an answer. In a moment the earpiece click-clacked with the voice of the operator.

"Elmira Central — What? — Yes, this is 2,102. — All right." He hung up the receiver. "She'll call me," said he. The common human being whistled a rambling tune in an attempt to express his independence of any excitement which might have been in the air of the hot-room. Nixon studied the palms of his hands. Once he drew a long breath, expelling it quickly through his lips. When the telephone bell rang with startling, undulating sharpness he jumped nervously. "God!" he shouted. "There it is."

"Elmira Central?" asked the commercial traveller. "Hello — I want to get Sadie Dutton — not a subscriber — no, I don't think so — try the directory — give me nearest pay station — What? — Sadie Dutton — All right, I'll hold it." He shifted the instrument,

and the others leaned forward expectantly. The commercial traveller held the receiver to his ear with one eye shut.

"Hello — Yes — Not in directory? H'm — Wait a minute — Give me the police station — headquarters. And say, don't disconnect me with your office when I'm through talking. I'll want another call in Elmira." He put his hand over the mouthpiece and addressed the others in the hot-room. "This is getting rather merry," he said with a dry smile.

"Yes — Hello? — Eh — Oh, yes, — Say, this is important — lot of money involved — I want to find the residence of a Sadie Dutton — not in directory, but keeps a lodging-house in Elmira somewhere — You don't know? Well, ask any of the patrolmen who are in the office — Yes, I'd be very much obliged."

The college youth tapped on the floor with his toes, which were drawn up in delighted excitement. "I don't quite see what he can do next, if this fails," said the common human being to the oldest man. "Keep quiet!" returned the latter, impatiently. "Somebody's on the other end now."

"Yes," said the commercial traveller. "You do! — What, number 48? — Well, say, where's the nearest drug store? — What name? — Holbert? — Yes, I've got it — Anybody there nights? — Over the store, eh? — Thanks." He waited, listening intently. A minute slipped by. "Thunderation!" he exclaimed, jiggling

the hook. "Yes — that you, Central? — What! New York! Cut me off from Elmira! — Oh, Lord!"

"Go ahead," said the oldest man, bruskly. "Get Elmira again. That's all you can do."

"Get me Elmira again," repeated the commercial traveller into the mouthpiece. "It's important! In a hurry!"

The common human being glanced up at the clock. Nixon watched the telephone instrument as if it were a living judge considering his fate. No gambling device of the many with which he had become familiar had had any such personality; his face wore an expression of dull pain and awe as he looked.

The thing was in operation once more. The commercial traveller craned his scrawny neck forward toward the mouthpiece. "All right — I want Holbert's Drug Store — yes, Holbert's — Address? What do you want of the address? — Well, go ahead then and find out — Look here, Elmira, what ails you?"

"Say," cried the college youth, touching the commercial traveller's elbow. "Don't let 'em give you the pay station. Get the apothecary's private telephone or you won't wake the night clerk." The other nodded. "I want the private line of the drug store," said he to the instrument. "Ring them till they answer."

Nixon arose from his chair to pace back and forth, with his eyes still on the nickel gleam of the telephone. The oldest man fingered the bald spot on the back of his

ponderous head and then leaned forward toward the pile of paper money on the table, with the white check conspicuously assertive above the mass of engraved yellow and green notes. "I'll count this, if you don't mind," said he, looking at Nixon, who assented with a gesture.

Once more the telephone became a sentient being. The commercial traveller stirred; there was a shine of triumph in his expression.

"Holbert's? This the night clerk?—Speak louder—What?" The oldest man dropped the bills which he had been counting. All heads bent toward the instrument. "Look here," the commercial traveller went on; "do you know where Sadie Dutton lives?—Sadie Dutton—Sadie Dutton—Dutton—Yes. Well, this is a matter of a life."

Nixon drew the back of his hand across his eyes and the others began to believe that the commercial traveller had not lied from one point of view.

"There isn't a moment to lose. — What? — No, No, I'm speaking in New York. Not Mrs. Dutton: I want Mrs. Nixon. Do you get that? N — I — X — O — N. Get her to this telephone just as quick as you can — No, I must talk to her — What's that? — I'll hold it."

"The night clerk is dressing!" exclaimed the common human being as if he could actually see. "He's hurrying."

"He may not find her!" the college youth cried. "She may not be there."

"ASK IT!" SAID THE OLDER MAN, HARSHLY.

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"I hope," mumbled Nixon unsteadily, "I hope he don't."

"He's afraid he'll win this bet," whispered the common human being soberly to the oldest man. The latter went on counting the money, bill by bill, with ridiculous care.

"I can just see that clerk pulling at the door-bell," said the college youth, suddenly. "What in thunder will they think of it at this house?"

"Even if she's there she'll have to dress," went on the common human being, rolling his knee-caps under his fingers. He looked at Nixon.

"Gee!" cried that individual, expelling a breath long held, and sitting down again. The company fell into a blank silence, to which the clock on the white-tiled wall marked time. After several minutes, from the plunge-room outside there came the sound of two attendants talking together in a confused mumble.

Suddenly the commercial traveller gripped the receiver hard and lifted the instrument with shaking fingers. "Hello," said he, catching his breath after the first word. "Who is this?—One moment." He covered the mouthpiece with his hand. "Gentlemen," said he. The others leaned toward him. Nixon sat with his elbows on his knees gazing straight at the telephone with a wide, unwinking stare. "We are now at the finish."

"Ask it," said the oldest man, harshly.

The commercial traveller put his mouth to the an-

nunciator, cleared his throat, and withdrew his hand. "This is about John Nixon — your husband. He no longer has any money. Can you hear that? — Will you let him come back to you?" the pleading tone of his voice exhibiting the fundamental inability of all men to attain to perfect justice. "I am his friend. Hold the line and answer when you are ready."

Nixon sat bolt upright in his chair. "Let 'em come!" he exclaimed, setting his jaw.

The college youth with quick inspiration rolled a weekly magazine into the form of a megaphone. "Give me the receiver," said he, holding the paper cone up before it. It was only a second before the answer came, clearly annunciated as if the woman stood in their midst.

"I ain't unforgivin'," said she, brokenly. "I've been a-prayin' he'd come back."

"Let me!" said the oldest man, brokenly, snatching the instrument out of the commercial traveller's hands and gazing down at Nixon, who had buried his face in the angle of his elbow. "Let me." He drew the mouthpiece to him as tenderly as if it had been a delicate living organism. "He's coming back to-day," said he, clearly and slowly and with determination. Then he placed the receiver softly on its hook and put the instrument on the table beside the pile of bills.

The college youth grabbed Nixon's hand. "Shake, old man," said he. "You've lost!"

Nixon raised his head and looked from one to the other dully, stupefied with joy. The commercial traveller stood up.

"Gentlemen," said he. "We are at the top of the world, so to speak. I suppose I need it as much as any of you, but — Well, let's call the bet off. Eh?"

"Not by a jugful!" cried Nixon, with a boyish shout. "I'm bust! I'm bust! Thank God!"

The college youth said, "He's right!" ran to the door, opened it, balanced himself on the edge of the plunge, and with a yelp curved his body into the icy water. The common human being sought the same relief. As they thrashed about in the water, the other three, laughing, watched them for a moment and then Nixon and the commercial traveller followed. The oldest man and an attendant roared at them excitedly that the performance might cost them their lives, but they came out pink-fleshed and gasping healthily.

"Good-by, gents," said Nixon, extending a dripping arm.

"Good luck," they answered, one after another, as they shook his hand. Not one of them said more.

The commercial traveller and the oldest man, however, followed him halfway to the stairs. "Oh, I just wanted to say," said the former. "You may be right about money, but that idea of yours about buzzards" — he shook his head vigorously — "it's all wrong. You're off about that. When you go out you'll see

blocks and blocks filled with people and people. But, say, old man, it's surprising — on the level — how decent they average up. Good-by!"

Nixon looked at the commercial traveller for a minute. "Oh sure!" said he.

The oldest man wheeled quickly away. "Here!" he shouted to an attendant. "I want my rub down," and then he looked back affectionately at the miserably thin body of the commercial traveller and the back of his head with its display of prominent ears, and quoted slowly to himself: "He put his hands again upon his eyes and made him look up, and the other was restored and saw every man clearly."

"J. P. J."

BEYOND the walls of the houses on either side of the cross-street lay an immense expanse of city which breathed and grumbled like a monstrous personality. It was far away and out of sight, not only because the battalions of residences with green plots before their ornate doorways rose up to make the street a universe of its own, but also because the fog was as thick as a molten flow and with its mystery narrowed the world to a distance of eighty steps.

Even the leather strap with its jangling bells, stretching across the tail end of the ragman's wagon, seemed a quivering thing of dreams; even its sharp sounds were muffled like the sounds of fancy. And "Dippy" sat below these bells on the floor of the car, among the half-empty burlap bags with their bottles, old magazines, and the inconceivable and fascinating variety of urban refuse.

Out of the corner of his eye "Dippy," who had no other name whatever, could furtively watch the thick torso of "Stub" Flitch, his employer, as it swayed on the seat when it exhaled its guttural cries of trade. To the boy it would have been a great relief to be free

from the eternal vigilance that was necessary to escape most of the whimsical blows with which Stub reminded him that his destiny lay in the coarse, begrimed hands of his employer and owner. For it was a foregone conclusion of Dippy's that Flitch owned him. The boy could not remember as far back as parents; his world consisted of streets, wharfs, and sky, and the little wooden junkshop downtown, wedged in between the warehouses, where both he and Stub slept at night. At any moment, then, if Stub took the notion, he might turn around and swing at Dippy with the whip because he owned him. The boy was said by Stub to be his nephew and eighteen years old. No one else had anything to say about Dippy except that he was feeble-minded. That was why he was given the only name he bore.

Possibly he was deficient in his head. He could not remember much that occurred early in his youth, he could barely remember having gone to school, and his only real pleasure consisted in looking in a downward direction or into persons' faces. The things that he saw in the ragman's journeys through the city confused him and made his head ache; the sky made him dizzy. But faces were marvellous and strange, indeed, and to sit where one could look down was delightful peace. Dippy used to spend all the time he could lying face downward on the wharfs over some crack between the boards that would allow him to see the bits of wood, straw, dust, dead things, and iridescent oil streaks

that variegated the flow in any square foot of the river. And now with the same instinct he had seated himself cross-legged above a crack in the wagon floor so that he might see the wonders of the wet and shining asphalt pavement slip by as the thin old horse jogged along.

"Bot'll'lls!" bellowed Flitch, and looked over his shoulder. He had an unshaved, eternally grinning face of uncertain nationality. "Watcher watching, Dip?"

The boy seldom spoke. Now he ducked instinctively, and shook his head stupidly, gazing back into the scrutiny of the older man. The latter turned around, reached forward with his leg and kicked the spare flank of his horse with his boot. Then again he looked over his shoulder. "You make me sick," he said, and laughed noisily. "You look like a woman!"

It was true, perhaps; Dippy was thin and graceful. His hands were dirty, but they were slim and prettily corded. And, most of all, his face was extraordinarily feminine — it was slender and perfect, with squareness of jaw, thinness of lips, and height of forehead. To see him cringe and squirm away from the bulky, coarse, wet-mouthed Stub Flitch was as repulsive as to see a thoroughbred dog with a broken spirit. Any one could tell that different blood ran in their two sets of veins.

"Yell some," commanded the master.

"Bottles!" cried Dippy. "Raigs!" The voice was thin, rough, and broken with daily strain, but it

seemed to cut the fog cleanly. In it there was that peculiar thrill that sometimes characterizes the voice of one as great and as tall as Cardinal Richelieu. A man upon a lamp post polishing the glass held his handful of cotton waste in the air as he turned to look. All that he saw was a rather stunted young boy who, in spite of the obscurity of the mist, gave the impression of one whose skin is of fine texture and delicate coloring.

"Raigs!" cried Dippy, staring through the fog into the lamp-cleaner's ignorant face. "Old bottles!"

Flitch was particularly irritable. He fumbled in his pocket for a thumb-and-forefinger of chewing tobacco and then upon his peculiar principles poured forth a flow of oaths at the youngster behind.

"Whoa, there!" he then roared. The horse seemed to rattle as much as the wagon in coming to a stop. "You shrimp! There's an alley! Shut your mouth and wake up!"

Progressing through the fog, the finding of an alley was not unlike the sighting of a vessel in mid-ocean. In the centre of the block this back-way thoroughfare, making its presence known by a darker series of shadows, cut down between the houses that faced on the two avenues. Dippy smiled at it in a friendly way. There was real pleasure in the hazards, chances, adventures, opportunities, secret glories of an alleyway; it was like unknown territory where no man has yet set foot. Its mouth was the mouth of an unassayed mine.

Dippy slid down to the asphalt, keeping a watchful eye upon Stub, who was searching under the seat for the horse's meagre dinner in a bag.

"Move!" growled the master, huskily. His grin and one protruding cheek gave him the appearance of that most vicious meanness of the sort that is masked under a fiercely good-natured cast of countenance. "Take that bag under the bottles there, you fool, and get back in a hurry, see?"

Dippy's nerves twinged visibly, as if he had been lashed across the back with the words. He ran forward in front of the horse's patient, lowered head, looking down as he ran. His flimsy overalls flapped about his thin wiry legs; with cap in hand, his long dark hair, wet with the damp, slid down above his eyes.

"Get a move on!" came the voice of Flitch through the fog. "I ain't goin' to wait here all day."

The boy looked over his shoulder to see his employer's face — the everlasting enigma of the coarse face that ate, walked, slept, talked, and swore at Dippy. But already the thick air had shut off from view horse, cart, and man that waited at the alley's mouth. Already Dippy was standing before the first ash barrel with its upper half crammed more than full of the rejected objects of domestic life. The boy plunged his slender bare forearm into the rubbish, turning it over and kneading it with the skill of a practised searcher of riffraff.

The barrel yielded nothing of real value. The only

possibility was the souvenir of Cottage City with its little red plush-covered pincushion, decorated with sea-shells. He wondered, with some awe, about the enchanting uncertainty of the where and what of Cottage City. And the shells were mystical too, suggestive of terrible storms at sea — a sea conceived by Dippy as being, like the river and the harbor, quite limited and small, filled with numberless gigantic craft bellowing and shrieking over the waters. He slipped the object into the mouth of the burlap bag and hastened on along the high board fence with the crunch of cinders and ashes under foot.

It had begun to rain, so that now the contents of the barrels that waited in fat-sided complacency for the ash-man's rounds were wet and soggy — more difficult to treat with efficiency and intelligence. Dippy, however, raised his thin face to the rain's tattoo, thankful that the world was a still smaller world because of it, and grateful that he occupied that world alone. The only sign of actual human life was the eternal soft purr and grumble of the city and the whining dialogue of two maid servants somewhere behind the wall and doors of one of the back-yard fences.

Dippy plunged into still another barrel and found a mirror — a little mirror in a cheap paper frame, made to appear like burnt leather. He laid down his sack on a black and white pile of ashes that still held the shape of the bottomless barrel that had been pulled away from

it. He even sat down on the wet ground, cross-legged, and inspected the reflection of his own face — a thing no less wonderful and full of mystery than the face of another.

To see oneself is extraordinary. To Dippy, as to all others, bodily injury, whether from typhoid germs or the welts raised by Stub Flitch, and the use of a mirror served to prove that oneself was not a detached soul, after all. The shapes, lines, weave of skin, and movements in his own face were as varied and inexplicable as the swirl of river water about one of the piles of the dock. As often as he found a piece of mirror he rediscovered how he looked. And now, having done with his gazing, he thought of the roaring, violent master and rose to his feet in foolish terror.

He passed two more barrels before he stopped again to drag forth a dilapidated umbrella as stripped and mournful as a consumptive school-teacher, and then on he went, with an alley cat, lean, gray, and suspicious, slinking along before.

The rain had brought a little wind, and the whisks of wet, salt-laden air seemed to bring in turn a still more sombre gauze of darkness. A blind slammed on the upper story of one of the houses; in a lower window of another a light shone forth, disclosing several figures of women sitting about a little table, drinking from cups. The alley smelled of wet smoke and the musty odor of things which people have thrown away. Dippy forgot

about the existence of Flitch, whom he had left only a minute before. Another barrel stood ready for inspection.

Upon its top was a laundry box in which the rain already was awash. The boy pushed it over the edge and immediately gave vent to a cry of great joy.

Beneath this cover, looking upward in proud disrepute, was a bust, broken at the base. It lay upon a dark bed of paper and rag litter. It was as white, as motionless, as human as the purity of death.

After all, it was only a head in plaster, a life-sized head of a small man with hollows at the temples and plaster hair that seemed to cling to the calm surface of the plaster forehead like real, wet human hair. His eyes were deep-set, and, because they were themselves only represented by two blank white balls, it was necessary for the imagination to fill them in with iris, pupil, and living expression. Whereupon the entire immobility of the adamantine bust was gone and the fire of vast energy and strong will shone out. Dippy again cried out softly with joy.

He gazed back into this glowing of the bust's personality; he searched this face as he searched all faces. It was better than any other. It lit something within the boy's breast; it drunkened him with himself. Upon his slim hands, resting on the rim of each side of the old barrel, he rested his weight, gazing down at the bust with enchanted, newly living eyes of his own. He al-

nost imagined that the plaster mouth would move. It was a small mouth, thin of lips, and the lines about it were tightly drawn. The mark of death was stamped upon it, sealed across the cold lips by the faithful sculp-or. The man had been marked with death, but upon his clean, bare, tightly drawn face an eternal courage had made its citadel. The man was a fighter!

Dippy, lover of faces, lifted the bust from the refuse. On the broken base was the inscription: "John Paul Jones." It was only a name. But he held the head up between his slender hands. The boy and the bust with its imagined eyes looked at each other earnestly, and Dippy made up his mind that he would not give up this head to Stub Flitch if he could steal it. Already it was like an acquaintance through the ages. It seemed to him as if he had seen this face always. Finally, indeed, occurring to his senses very suddenly, he realized that this face before him was almost exactly his own.

From his pocket he drew out the little mirror to look long and earnestly at himself. The raindrops clouded the glass; the blind above slammed again, running footsteps sounded on the other side of the wall and the door of the back yard opened suddenly directly in front of the boy. A maid with a waste-basket in her hand, startled by Dippy's presence, stepped back in surprise. She was thin, lean-jawed, and sallow.

"Oh, fer mercy sakes!" said she.

The boy reached out quickly for the bust. "You didn't want this, did yer?" he whispered.

"No; it's broke — have ye no eyes? It ain't good fer anything. What do you want of it?"

"I think," said Dippy. "it's me father!"

"Poor boy, what are ye saying?" returned the lean one. "Get away an' let me empty this into the barrel. I'm wet already. Ye father! Who said so?"

"Nobody," answered Dippy. "It's the face."

The girl straightened up, puffing red, and looked over her shoulder at the bust. "God save us, what an awful thing it is," she cried after a moment. "Oh, my — me heart," she fell to laughing discordantly. "On me word, ye look like two pins — the two of ye."

She thought a moment. "Come wid me," she said. "Fer all I know, it might be yer old man. You'd best ask the boss. He knows all about this gent. The mad man he was, when it fell!"

Dippy laid the bust back into the barrel, staring at the servant with awe.

"Come!" she said sharply, and the boy ducked. "Come wid me." And she fell to laughing again as he obediently followed through the deserted kitchen and up the back stairs. "Stay here," she cautioned in the darkness of the hallway. "The boss will take me for a crazy woman. But wouldn't it be awful if it *was* yer father. Oh, me — the breath is out of me body."

The door closed behind her as she made her way into

the front of the house. The black entry smelled warmly of the simmer in the kitchen. Dippy could hear his heart; he could see the imaginary white face of John Paul Jones staring at him out of the indeterminate darkness. From the mysterious other side of the door came the sound of a voice with extraordinarily low notes that seemed to vibrate powerfully upon the air. Suddenly there was a roar — the roar of a mirthful lion. The boss was laughing. The door opened, and Dippy, stepping forward for fear of standing still in the path of the lean servant, found himself face to face with the man in the library.

This monarch of the house sat behind a great, dark, oak table on which were books and papers, all in chaos. A draft of air from the kitchen stairs scattered some of these papers off the table and floated them to the floor at the foot of the long, disorderly bookshelf. The man paid no attention to them; in fact, he laid his two heavy-fingered hands on several which were in front of him and swept them outward with affected impatience. He was a fat man — not with good-nature, but with conceit and selfishness. He gazed at the boy with the laughter still marked upon his face.

Then in the twinkling of an eye the mirth was gone. His smile dropped magically.

"By thunder!" he said, with the notes of a mighty bass violin. "You do!"

Dippy gazed into his face helplessly.

"You look the part," went on the man in his booming whispers. "You look like him. Huh! That's a fact. You look enough like him to be his — "

He paused, gazing steadily at the youth with the wet hair and dirty cap. "Don't you know your father?" he asked savagely.

"No, sir."

"Mother?"

"No, sir."

"Name?"

Dippy shook his head stupidly. It moved gracefully upon its slender neck.

The man laughed again. "All right, kid. You can get out the way you came." Dippy cringed. "He isn't your father," the man went on. "Oh, no. Wait a bit. Huh! He's not. No! Why, my boy, that man died a hundred years ago. He was in the navy — a fighter. He died in Paris, very sick. Always a fighter. Loved it. Loved it like a good dinner. That was Paul Jones." He looked at the boy again through narrowed, scrutinizing eyelids. He plucked at the shortly cropped hair on his upper lip.

"Furthermore, my boy, he wasn't ever married. As I remember it — he was never married. Follow his example. He was never married — a great fighter! 'I haven't begun to fight,' that's what he said. Why, he had *no* children —"

He raised his two thick hands into the air, shaking

his conspicuous, rattling white cuffs back from his hairy wrists. "Therefore his own particular strain of blood," he went on, "died with him. Now blood, my boy — Hold on!"

A new thought had come to him. He picked up a pen, then flung it down on the desk. "Here's a pretty fancy," he went on, turning toward the dim and fading light that slanted in through the window. "I've read his life. I don't remember of his being married. Say he died along about 1793 or 1794 — a great fighter. But that don't concern us. The world, we'll say, knew nothing of his marriage. Sit down, my boy. I'll paint you a picture worth looking at!"

Dippy gazed back at him painfully. "Not me father?" said he, beseechingly.

"No, no. He died a hundred years ago. But we'll say it was the harbor of Brest, France, along about 1778 — a spring day, do you see? There was a frigate lying out there on the blue water in the sunlight." The big man shut his eyes and talked like one in a dream. "Now the people on shore who have crowded down on to the wharfs to see the American vessel set sail — why, they've got on the blue and yellow and red blouses of French fishermen. But they don't have to shade their eyes from the sunlight because the sun in the morning comes up over the land and not over the water. And more people come down from the little crooked streets, and the dogs bark, and when it is still a moment you

can hear the blocks on the frigate creak. They're hoisting sail, see? You can see rowboats all around the American vessel. She's the *Ranger*. Great Scott, wait till I get through!"

"Yes, sir," whispered Dippy. His eyes shone.

The big one shut his eyes again. "Then there are women there. They're talking. That's women! They're talking French, too. But we don't know anything about that." He pointed. "See that girl over there." He pointed again impatiently at the bookcase. "Slim and pretty as a picture. Can't be over twenty. Red cheeks. A fisherman's daughter. Yellow silk scarf around her neck. Now we're going some. A good girl in her heart. She doesn't talk with the rest. She's waiting for the officers to come down and take a boat out to the frigate. She's right out on the end of the old wharf. Yes, sir. Poor little girl. She'd cry if it weren't for the people around.

"Here come the officers now. There's a big feller — six feet two — heavy beard. Everybody falls back. A big American, see? And behind him there are two others. The crowd is excited. Then there's the little man — this Jones — the fighter. These fishermen standing around point to him and jabber away. He's the one! And the girl on the end of the wharf with the red cheeks — she smiles when she sees him. Lord, but don't she love him!

"Well, he stops. By George, he kisses her! He

whispers something to her. It's on the forehead he's kissed her. Who dares to laugh? Nobody. He says something and points out to the frigate on the — what shall we say? — dancing blue waters. He says it won't be long before he comes back. So she smiles through her tears. He loves her all right. He means it. She watches that boat of officers row all the way out to the ship. The sailors' oars go in and out as evenly as clockwork. She bites her red lips. She's brave!"

The man stopped. "There," said he. Dippy caught his breath again. His dark, wondering eyes still were fixed upon the pointing forefinger of the other.

"Now suppose — just suppose — that when he came back to Brest she was gone —that he couldn't find her."

Dippy gave a little cry.

The man smiled with trivial self-satisfaction.

"Quite a picture? Eh? Do you think the girl with the red cheeks was your great-grandmother? Do you think that he was your — "

"Yes, sir," whispered the youth timidly.

The other rubbed his ears with his stout hands and laughed aloud once more. "You think it's the blood? Well, there's nothing in it, boy. It was just a picture. I ought to have been a writer instead of this." He pointed to the papers. "I've wasted enough time already. There's nothing to it. I made it all up."

"No, sir," said Dippy, so softly that the man did not hear him.

"Not that door — the other," commanded the latter, reaching for a pile of letters. Dippy went softly down the stairs and out into the mist once more. The lean servant had apparently vanished from the kitchen. Rain, and whining, raw wind drove aslant through the alley. As it slapped his wet clothes till they clung to his wiry little body, Dippy shivered, not from the cold, but for fear that something might have happened to his plaster bust. He had left it lying in the ignominy of the refuse barrel. He opened the back-yard door. It was there! The cold white face gazed back into his with its intelligent, imaginary eyes.

Dippy reached down behind the ash-cans for his burlap bag. He would not place the bust in it yet. He would put his arm about it and carry it along the alley while he thought out some plan by which he could make it his own and defend it against all the world. With a little gasp he put his face close to it. His warm, living flesh touched the hard, cold, wet cheek of the cast; his own skin flushed rosy with the leap of affection.

And now there were footsteps down the alley, crunching over the wet ashes. The boy stopped to listen, his eyes filled with terror. Suddenly there sounded the voice of the forgotten master, growls of profane anger. Stub Flitch, furious with waiting, was coming out of the fog like a materializing shape, hunting for the boy, short of breath.

As he caught sight of Dippy he grinned threateningly,

THE BOY STOPPED TO LISTEN, HIS EYES FILLED WITH TERROR.

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pulling his coat sleeves back from his thick wrists to give the impression without speaking that he intended violence. The boy stood still, shivering, fascinated, almost surprised that Flitch had come back into his life.

"Come here, you rat!" exclaimed the ragman in a hoarse whisper. "Whatcher been doing while I've been settin' there on the cart in the rain? You've got a wallop coming to *you*. I'll whale the life out'n *you!*"

Dippy laid the bag and the bust on the ground.

"Quit," he whined, squirming toward Flitch like a kicked puppy. "I ain't done nothing."

"You ain't?" cried the man, with slowly delivered blasphemies. "Then I'll show you!" He drew his paw wide open. It descended flat against Dippy's ducking head. The boy gave a little squeal and, dropping to his knees, covered his face with his hands.

"Now cry," said Flitch, almost good-naturedly. "You remind me of a woman. Why in hell don't you ever cry?"

Dippy merely gazed back into the eternal puzzle of Flitch's face.

"And whatcher got there?" asked the master, ironically, pointing to the bust that lay on the ground and staring at the two living beings with blank eyes. "A broken statyer? You thought you had something pretty nice, eh? A busted plaster cast of some sporty guy, eh? Ain't worth nothing!"

"Don't touch him!" screamed Dippy. "Don't touch him!"

He watched the white face, lying in a little puddle of water and looking upward, as if he expected to see it change its calm, brave, and melancholy expression. He imagined, indeed, that the lips shut a little tighter. He felt his own lips tightening! He rose to his feet. His skin was alive with a strange fire. He hurled himself at Flitch, beating upon the other's neck and cheeks.

He felt the fingers of his left hand close on flesh. It might have been an ear. Every fibre in his arm, as if acting upon an intelligence of its own, tightened. He would not be shaken loose. With his other hand he pounded or felt for more flesh. He could smell the tobacco in the other's mouth. But out of his own eyes he could not see.

He could not see when he was shaken loose. He could not see the fist that shot out toward him and knocked his body across the alleyway, landing it face downward. There must have been a moment of unconsciousness as he staggered backward. Because suddenly he was aware that the cold water in the ruts of the ash-carts had touched his wrist and awakened him. He could see nothing for a moment. He could not even hear. He could smell. He could smell the musty odor of the ashes.

Then suddenly his ears opened and he could hear the puffing and blowing of Flitch, who stood above him,

breathless, speechless, in anger and astonishment. Watching the ragman, he rose to his hands and knees. He put one hand to his own mouth and felt a marvellous pleasure when he saw that it was covered with blood. A little trickle of red was running down Flitch's cheek too. The world swam a little. He could not gather strength enough to rise to his feet.

Flitch drew his sleeve across his bruised, perspiring cheeks. He looked down at Dippy, one corner of his grinning mouth raised like a snarling dog's. He turned toward the other face — the face of the cast that still looked upward with sad content, and stepping forward he delivered it a kick with the toe of his thick, heavy-soled boot.

The head sailed easily up and struck with great force against the brick wall. It shattered as completely as if it had been a soap bubble; it seemed to vanish. It left only a little shower of white powder and fragments. The largest piece was the nose.

Dippy gave vent to a wail of grief that caused Flitch, steaming from exertions, to turn toward him, with a half-scared expression upon his pasty face.

The boy was up again, was coming at him with gleaming eyes, whispering to him what he would do. Flitch exhaled a vile epithet; he struck at Dippy with his closed fist. The boy slid under the blow. He thrust his hands into the space between the flannel shirt and the loose-skinned neck of the older man. There was

a ripping of cloth. Silently the two struggled again over the ashes, back and forth between the alley walls, the boy's lithe legs and arms viciously clinging to the stocky body of his master. One of Dippy's thumbs found a hollow beneath Flitch's ear and the ragman groaned, thrashing about in agony, beating at the boy's face that was buried beneath his arm, and now loosened from his hold by the greater strength of his adversary, the lad slid down. But he rose suddenly, his clenched hand with his weight behind it, striking Flitch under the jaw, snapping the teeth together with audible violence.

The ragman groaned, shook himself, dashed the daze out of his eyes with the back of one hand and rushed at Dippy in a blind rage. He bore him backward to a barrel and with a hand upon the slender throat bent the boy's spine until he saw his eyelids fall. Then with another oath he stood away with hands and fingers stretching outward and watched the boy's body slide down to the ground as limp as an empty meal sack.

"You rat!" he repeated. "Do you want me to kill you?"

It was quiet in the alleyway. For a moment the wind had fallen so that the only sound was the rumble of the city and the drip-drip of the rain upon the wet papers scattered about on the ground. The ragman swayed upon his legs. He stooped down, scooped up a little water from a puddle, and washed the red streaks on his face and neck. He stumbled forward

upon his hands and knees, breathing heavily, dizzy, resting.

After a moment the boy's eyes opened slowly. He sighed, he stretched his arms, and, springing suddenly to his feet threw himself upon the other. "Now!" he grunted. "Don't!" bellowed Flitch. "You've had enough, you fool."

Together the two rolled about on the ground. Dippy could see Stub's eyes. They were bloodshot and dazed. He struck first one of them, then the other. "Not enough," whispered Dippy in his master's ear. "More fight!" Heavy, thick, muscular fingers closed on his windpipe. He could hear the gurgle in his own throat. No air! No air! He rolled over, digging his toes into the ground, but the fingers still held their clutch. Dizziness all but overcame his senses. He reached out with fingers here and there — a careful search along the ground where he could feel but could not see. Suddenly he touched a hard object with rough jagged edges. He gripped it in his hand. A moment more it would be too late. With the new weapon he beat upon Flitch's forehead, — once, twice, three times. The grasp on his own throat loosened. He sucked in a breath of air that squeaked down his constricted throat.

One more blow delivered—hard! The fingers on his windpipe fell away. Flitch quivered like a nervous horse, then sank back upon the ground, his arms outstretched, his open eyes gazing vacantly upward into the sky.

Dippy lay for several moments upon the other's inert body, but having gained his breath, he arose. He looked at the object around which his finger tips were still tightened. It was the largest fragment of the plaster bust.

He bent down to see if Flitch were still alive. He heard the thump of the excited heart, he listened to the whistle of his labored breathing. He looked for the last time upon the round, grinning face of his master. Then he walked away into the fog and darkness — to the street — into the city.

JENKS AND JULIANNA

EVEN persons from Boston do not become real Boston persons until they have gone far beyond the ordinary formative period. Should any of the young by chance be far away from the city for a time, then just so long do they delay becoming typical of Boston. John Sexton was one of these.

On leaving college he had gone westward into the lumber camps of Oregon to indulge his tastes for doing something real. Occasionally he wrote letters to his family, but only three of them were remembered. The first, addressed to his father, stated that he had cut his foot open with a splitting axe. A second, addressed to his mother, told her that he had gone into a partnership in the manufacture of log-jam machinery. The last, addressed to his sister, informed her that he was coming home, that he would bring his partner, and that the partner's name was James Jenks. He had always had an extraordinary instinct in domestic diplomacy and, granting that these letters had to be written, there is no question but that each was written to the right person. His sister would not have enjoyed reading about the wounded foot, his father would have taken

the announcement of the partnership as a request for an investment, and the common sound of the name of Jenks would have caused some little anxiety to his mother.

The actual appearance of this Jenks revealed little regarding the safety of harboring him for a considerable period in a country home where he would be rather constantly in the companionship of a daughter twenty-two years old, who must soon have a husband. He was a fine-looking, healthy sort of animal, brown and silent. He let the first careful joy of welcome to John, in which the family for a moment indulged itself, spend its force; then, forestalling the groom, he threw his travelling things out of the trap on to the steps and let himself be greeted without uttering a word. He smiled with extraordinary admiration at John's mother; he shook the hand of the father, the Colonel, who, he knew, had been the hero of many a brave board of trustees and many a gallant directors' meeting; and he gazed unduly long into Miss Julianna Sexton's brown eyes, as if her existence was an astounding and almost unbelievable fact.

"And who is this young man, John?" asked Mrs. Sexton of her boy after dinner. She was thinking of the frank attempt that the stranger had made to become acquainted with her daughter's eyes. "I think his manners are nice, but he does not Fletcherize and he has such a curious drawl when he does talk, and do you realize how seldom he says anything?"

"Jim's all right," returned the son, carelessly tossing

a critical monthly magazine on the wicker piazza table. "A perfectly good young man."

His mother was frowningly thoughtful. She was watching Jenks himself, who, untamed by a hearty meal, seemed to be preaching a doctrine of ceaseless activity by chasing white, wire-haired terriers over the velvet green of the tennis-courts, while Julianna stood with one hand upon the net-post, smiling with the infection of vitality.

"Who are his people?"

"Great guns! I don't know," said John. "His father raises cantaloups in Kansas, I think. His sister's picture isn't much to look at. That's all I know about them."

His mother sighed, imitating peace of mind. She reflected, too, that her daughter had never in her whole life shown a disposition to go walking with the same man two days in succession. She settled her great and respectable weight into an easy chair with the suggestion of a personality whose assurance of the correctness of one's own philosophy is more Chinese than American.

"He's a dandy," said her son, gazing down into the bowl of his pipe. "He's the straightest, cleanest lad imaginable."

"Yes, dear," answered the mother, "your friends would be *that*, of course. Undoubtedly those qualities are the first consideration." She patted down a fold in her dress, glancing out toward the glimmer of the sun,

which was setting beyond the faraway battalion of maples already taking on the colors of autumn. "Don't you think it is too damp for Julianna to be sitting out under the trees?"

"Isn't she a wonder?" replied John Sexton, disregarding his mother and looking toward his father.

"You would think so if you could see the congestion of young men who pour out here at the week-end." The Colonel laughed heartily, as if he had said something excruciatingly funny.

John turned up his nose. "Especially in a town where there aren't enough young men — I mean young men who have been registered and judged for points — to go round," he said.

"Judged?" exclaimed Mrs. Sexton, who was far more intellectual than her mind would allow her to be and who suffered occasionally from slow thinking.

"Of course — by the Patroness Trust of Boston."

"What can you be talking about?" his mother said. "You have gone so far away from the traditions of the East! There they come, now! Julianna is *such* a child. Come here, Julianna, dear. Didn't you say you were planning to visit Mary Hudson before they came back from Manchester?"

The girl nodded and tossed a mushroom, found on the lawn, into John's lap. "I've given it up," said she.

"Why, when?"

"When?" said the daughter, fingering the maga-

zines. "I don't know. I don't want to go because — the water is so cold on the North Shore!"

Mrs. Sexton immediately turned toward Jenks, who was still paying marked attention to the terrier puppies. That gentleman was as silent and as brown as ever. But his hostess experienced a second little thrill of anxiety.

Seldom did her intuition deceive her. For giving her a daughter who, through her débutante season and since, had never been touched at the heart she now thanked Fate. For the possession of a daughter who had been brought up to see life in its proper proportions she thanked herself. How well the girl knew that family, portion, and tradition were bronze Buddhas not to be touched by the heretic hands of those not belonging to the strange priestcraft that began with the Plymouth Colony! All this was fortunate. Mrs. Sexton was not so old that she had forgotten the days when she rode horses over fences. She had a very keen memory of the kind of man which then attracted her. To be sure, she had not married such a man. But she knew that the personality of the Westerner, Jenks, whose father—Heaven help us!—raised cantaloups, was of the sort that might have made her forget herself at one time. Cantaloups and the name of James Jenks! That would be a nice thing to have to tell one's friends about a son-in-law.

Again, her woman's intuition was awakened by the

departure of John and his father to the Berkshire Hills. Four years before, the head of the family, who, in this generation, could not write pamphlets on antislavery doctrines and was truly tired of the Philippine question, had turned the Reform Instinct toward the northern Appalachian forests and had started a hardy catalpa grove on three hundred acres of western Massachusetts. It gave the Colonel a measure of satisfaction to visit his grove occasionally and thereby recall to his mind that there were land and people on the other side of the Connecticut River. Now that John, the lumber expert, was home, he was insistent upon procuring his opinion. Their absence left a smaller household — left, indeed, fewer persons to stand between the growing intimacy of the silent Jenks and the voluble Julianna. Mrs. Sexton made frantic attempts to fill her house with young persons. But other mothers who happened to be within commuting distance had learned of Jenks from the indiscreet Mrs. Sexton herself, and they would have no more willingly exposed their daughters to him than to a case of diphtheria. On the other hand, and as if by the design of the Evil One, every registered young man in Boston seemed to be in Europe or in camp with the troop or battery, or cruising up the Maine coast.

It was almost impossible to keep the two apart. Even a mother could not make a porch invalid out of a girl who had forearms as muscularly pretty as those of

Julianna. There was nothing to do but let them play tennis and ride together. Mrs. Sexton had no objection that would have seemed sensible except the objection that Jenks did neither of these things passably well. She could only be thankful that Jenks was a silent man, and her daughter, undoubtedly, a very cool-brained girl. She would not have called Julianna calculating, but she would have called her, at least, thoughtful. She had been thoughtful enough to reject seven young gentlemen already, some of whom were, without question, "possible" — a display of judgment which in a community where the eligible young men who were something more than automatic were not inexhaustible, denoted a fine appreciation of one's own feminine powers.

The extraordinary event, then, of the Thursday after the Colonel and his son had left for the Berkshires came as a dreadful shock to the careful Mrs. Sexton. She had, of course, talked confidentially and with great subtlety of phrase to Julianna about the embarrassment which would be caused every one should Julianna, in an unguarded moment, allow Jenks, should he so desire, to interpose even the first sharp edge of courtship's own wedge. Oh, Julianna understood her mother perfectly. She said so in words as shrewdly chosen as those of the Delphian oracle — meaning nothing and yet everything.

On the terrible Thursday afternoon Jenks returned from the city, where he had gone in the morning to at-

tend to some business affair. Julianna and Miss Langdell, a young neighbor, had been canoeing on the river, and now, in the self-conscious joy of appearing disreputable with wet skirts and straying strands of hair, were sipping lemonade upon the piazza, while Mrs. Sexton read *La Revue des Deux Mondes*, wishing that her New Englandness had not said, "None for me, thank you." It was a late fall day of July heat.

"Mr. Jenks!" said Miss Langdell, suddenly peering out through the vines at the crunch of the gravel. She almost whispered it, and, furthermore, she plainly enough addressed herself to Julianna, and to Julianna alone. This fact was important only because it served in a mysterious way to awaken more than the ordinary feline watchfulness of the older woman.

"How d'y do," said Jenks, addressing them all through the medium of one of the wire-haired puppies spread out on the Navajo rug. "That looks cool." It was Miss Langdell who had offered him the glass. She was a girl with many freckles who had an ambition to be a very manly good fellow.

And now, over the top of her periodical, Mrs. Sexton suddenly caught her daughter exactly as she had caught Jenks the first moment that she had seen him. On that occasion of his arrival this gaze into the daughter's eyes had been long and surprised. Now it was the daughter who did this strange gazing. Such was the awfulness of this Thursday! Mrs. Sexton retired to her

apartments and exhausted two hours in weighing the significance of her observation. And, in spite of the fact that she remembered distinctly the peculiar light which shines out of the orbs of healthy and infatuated young persons, she threw discretion to the winds and reached the conclusion that, perhaps, she had been mistaken.

Nevertheless, the possibilities were discomforting. When a letter came from her husband the following day she even considered telegraphing a reply. For this letter informed her that the Colonel and John were planning to take a motor-car trip from the Berkshires to the French-Canadian settlements below Quebec. It was full of references to the delights of renewing a wholesome comradeship with one's own son. "I feel younger and happier with John," wrote the Colonel in his fine hand, "than I have felt for years. I know, of course, that you may think me selfish and that you will want the boy with you. But I am almost inclined to have my lark and suffer with my conscience afterward. John has promised to write to Jenks and explain that we do not mean to be rude in leaving him for a short period. Of Jenks he speaks very highly. But I still feel about that matter as I did when you and I agreed upon it before I left. However, I know the house is full of young persons and that you are capable of managing all."

Mrs. Sexton would have liked to telegraph her hus-

band to come home on the next train and to bring John. She would, she felt, in this one of the five hysterical moments which she had had since her marriage, have liked to telegraph for the militia. She had fears — apparently groundless fears — that Julianna would mutiny. Yet, to disclose her fears to Colonel Sexton would be to disclose a fear of herself. It would be almost as humiliating as consulting with Mrs. Langdell, who was a great-granddaughter of John Hancock. She sent no telegram. Instead, she wrote an indulgent letter to the Colonel, telling him to have a good time. "He will never know that I have suffered," she said to herself as she shut her writing-desk and looked thoughtfully at a picture of Cotton Mather which hung above it.

Fortunately, however, Jenks was obliged to spend many of his days in the city; it was only in the evening that he had his opportunity to be silent in Julianna's presence, and, without words, toss his personality to her across the room.

Often, when he spoke at all, he asked a question — some strange, odd, unnatural query, worrying to Mrs. Sexton and suggestive of a complete internal ease of his own.

"Do you know a city, Mrs. Sexton," he might say, "where all the clan say to each other, 'I'll pat your head if you'll pat mine, but my conscience will not permit me to tell you that I'll do it with any pleasure'?"

"Certainly," Mrs. Sexton would say with real sincer-

ity. "New York. A very new and clever characterization, too!"

Whereupon the good woman would smile with proper appreciation, innocent of being his victim.

Some persons would have thought Jenks a mean man to play such tricks, but Julianna seemed to be able to forgive him with great ease, and Mrs. Sexton, remaining innocent, was, of course, unharmed. Jenks would lapse back into silence, resting his large hands, with the veins standing up under the brown skin, on the chair arms, and stare off through the clear air of the fall evening, lazily content that the girl should tell him of the little things that interested her. Now and then he turned his head slowly toward her to indicate how pleased he was to be near her. At such moments Julianna, in her wild, girlish and unwonted fancy, might have thought he looked like some splendid monarch of the jungle; Mrs. Sexton secretly compared him to a snake.

Sometimes this evil conception became a cause of real renewed anxiety to the mother. It occurred to her when, after the two had come back from a stroll through the dusk to the river, the beautiful Julianna would hold her graceful head a little higher than usual as she entered the doorway and, in a burst of gay spirits, would go to the piano under the yellow light and play allegro movements from a symphony or two. Something in the girl's manner suggested to Mrs. Sexton the

personality of a feminine conqueror — the Queen Boadicea driving a chariot to victory. She made up her mind that she would say something more about Jenks to her daughter.

And, indeed, upon the following evening, having retired to her chamber to consider the matter, she determined to let no time go by before she interposed her new dissertation on ineligible young men.

The two were on the piazza below, the murmuring of their distant voices disclosing that Miss Langdell and her brother had driven off homeward over the hill. Mrs. Sexton wondered that Julianna and Jenks should choose to sit out in the sharp air of early October. But it was not till they had strolled off under the big oak, dragging their long shadows across the moonlit green of the lawn, that with a start she realized that the silent Jenks had been doing more than half of the conversation. She waited impatiently for Julianna to come up to her room.

Mrs. Sexton knew well enough that parents should not approach their children with weighty matters attired in nightgowns; but on this occasion she was too anxious to repeat her cautions to her daughter to worry through a delay. The name, James Jenks, the thought of her daughter leaving Boston, and her conception of a family whose only estate was a cantaloup farm in the Arkansas River irrigation district, had all returned to her, and the horror and dread of a careful mother now refilled her heart. She only waited for the sound of

Julianna's door before she ventured forth along the hall and entered her daughter's room.

Naturally, it was most disconcerting to her to find the girl, still dressed, lying across the bed and, to all appearances, crying bitterly. Here was an old local family in bad order indeed. And one of the girl's slippers had fallen from her arched foot to the floor.

"Julianna!" cried the mother, hurrying to seat herself beside the prostrate form of the girl. And, with an awkward thrusting forward of her arms, she embraced the slender, graceful figure.

The daughter continued her grief as if it had received no interruption by reason of her parent's bulky onslaught.

"Julia!" the other one whispered desperately. "Tell me! I insist! But, for mercy's sake, don't tell me that you are crying from joy!"

"No," sobbed the girl, raising herself to a sitting posture.

"Ah!" exclaimed Mrs. Sexton, with evident relief. "Then what has happened, dear? Your mother will comfort you."

"I do not want to be comforted," said Julia. "I'm glad I love him." She faced her mother with open, defiant eyes. "I'm glad of that, anyway."

"Love him!" gasped Mrs. Sexton. "You are in love with Mr. Jenks?"

"Yes, mamma — so very much!"

"It is a calamity!" affirmed the older woman coldly. "You have not accepted him, Julia dear? Do not tell your mother that you have accepted him! I—"

"No," said Julianna, examining her fingers. "He said I had marvellous hands, too. But he wouldn't ask for either of them. I hate him!"

"And so he has made love to you. That in itself is enough to show his breeding."

"I know, mamma," Julianna answered, "but he makes such *nice* love. It is so different from the others."

"Different?" cried Mrs. Sexton, plucking at her nightdress. "What can you mean?"

"Oh," the girl said, "it's so *real!*"

Her mother suppressed a smile of sympathy; Julianna went to the window and gazed out at the harvest moon peeping over the oaks. "It is terrible!" she whispered. "Too awful for words!"

"Tell me!" commanded Mrs. Sexton. "Tell me!"

There was no answer; the daughter's wholesomely broad shoulders shook as if she were sobbing. "They love each other," thought the mother. "She has said so. But still there is time to prevent the worst. James Jenks — cantaloups!"

"He loves you?" she said aloud.

"A great deal, mamma. He has loved lots of girls. But he loves me ever so much more, mamma."

"He seems to be an honest young man," Mrs. Sexton commented dryly. "And has he — has he kissed you?"

"Oh, mamma, please, please don't ask me that!" cried Julianna. "You know I never kissed anybody else."

A feverish debate went on in Mrs. Sexton's mind. "Come here, Julia, dear," she said finally. "Your mother can sympathize with you. It is not so terrible, after all. Come here, Julia." She moved her bulky body along the bed to give room for her daughter.

And Julianna turned once more toward her as if she were about to accept the offer of comfort. But she only stepped as far as the dressing-table, where she rested one hand upon the edge and gazed pathetically into the reflection of her own eyes that stared back from the mirror above the glinting display of silver boxes and brushes.

"You poor, mussed-up child!" exclaimed Mrs. Sexton humanly. "Your hair is *so* disordered."

"He likes it best that way," said Julia, savagely, and covered her eyes with her hands as if to press back the tears. "There is no use, mamma," she said, looking up with a weak little smile. "I shall never be happy again. I haven't told you all."

"Not all?" cried the poor mother in horror. She clutched at the air, seeking assistance to rise to her slippered feet.

"No," Julianna answered in a trembling voice. "You see, he was so fond of me, but he never said so for such a long time. He never would ask me, mamma. I couldn't help his loving me, could I? That hadn't anything to do with me, had it? So I just asked him."

"Did what?" cried Mrs. Sexton.

"Asked him," repeated the girl with spirit.

"You proposed to him? What taste!"

"Yes, mamma."

"And so — mercy on us! — you are engaged! To James Jenks!"

"No, mamma."

"Then — am I losing my reason? — you are not engaged?"

"No," said Julianna, her upper lip moving tremulously. "He rejected me, mamma!"

"Rejected you!" Mrs. Sexton's voice rose almost to a wail. "Rejected my daughter! For what reason?"

"He loves me," the girl sobbed, burying her face in the cretonne covering of the sofa, "but he says his father — would object — to our family."

The import of these words did not quickly impress itself upon Mrs. Sexton's confused mentality. When the full realization came to her she gasped like one whose lungs have been penetrated by a bullet. With mouth open she sat down quickly and heavily upon the bedside, staring at the prone figure of Julianna and unable to form the syllables of the expressions to which she would have given voice.

"To our family?" she finally ejaculated. "Julianna, has this young man gone to bed?"

"No, mamma," the girl answered faintly. "He has gone to walk through the fields to the river."

"Ah!" the older woman said; in her tone was a suggestion of a lioness about to spring upon the thief of its cub. "I desire to have a talk with this young man Jenks — at once."

"He said," sobbed Julianna, "that he would have to explain it to you — because he is your guest."

Mrs. Sexton sniffed. She rose and proceeded to the door with a determined waddle. "Bertha," she called to the maid, "I will go downstairs again — my gray house-gown!" To her daughter she addressed over her shoulder a little exclamation of motherly sympathy. "What folly!" she said softly. "Go to bed, dear. You poor, tired girl! Remember, your mother is always loyal!"

She dressed, provided herself with a warm wrap, and went down to the piazza. The air was sharp. She drew a chair toward the steps; she settled into it, huddled in the shadow like a bandit lying in wait. "Cantaloups!" she said.

In the moonlight, and approaching, Mr. James Jenks looked as brown and as silent as ever; the glow of his tobacco appeared, intermittently, to light up his face. He stopped at the steps, knocked the ashes from his pipe, and gazed up with irritating peace into the sky's rotunda.

She coughed.

"Oh, Mrs. Sexton," he drawled as easily as if he had expected to find her there. "I have something to tell

you. May I come up and sit down? It is wonderful air, isn't it?" No longer was he the silent Westerner. She endeavored to begin her attack, but he went on without a change of pace in his words.

"I have something to tell you, Mrs. Sexton," he said again. "You see, your daughter suggested to me to-night that we — what shall I say? — that we be married. Of course, this was very flattering to me. I appreciate the honor, indeed I do. I cannot tell you how sorry I am. I had to reject — what shall you and I call it? — her proposition. It was too bad."

"Too bad!" exclaimed the matron. "Continue, Mr. Jenks," she went on freezingly. She had discovered that the use of this certain pitch of voice always struck terror to the hearts of young men.

"Surely," Jenks replied with great ease of manner. He even shut his eyes dreamily. "It *was* too bad, because I love Julianna exceedingly. I have never seen any woman before whom I was inclined to marry. But my duty to the name of Jenks — it is a painful subject, I know. Yes, my father would object. It would give him great pain."

Mrs. Sexton felt her wrath surging up within her. She began to doubt her ability to be conservative. Had it not been for the paralyzing surprise of his next remark she would have been tempted to arise and sweep away into the house.

"To begin with," Jenks went on reflectively, "my

father has so great a fear of my marrying a young woman who will grow stout as she grows older. I remember his saying, 'When you choose a wife, son, look to the girth of the parents.' Now, as you know, the Colonel is a little — well, out of training."

"He was a skilled athlete when I married him," said Mrs. Sexton. "Julianna hasn't an ounce of fat on her body."

"Oh, no — not now. But then I have seen young Siwash Indian girls as wiry and lean as a timber-wolf, who were regular tubs when they became squaws."

"You show some delicacy in not mentioning me," said Mrs. Sexton almost hysterically.

"Oh, I wouldn't do that! Indeed, I would not. How could I?" Jenks hastened to say with apparent sympathy. "You must see how hard it is for me to speak of this at all. But you asked me to be perfectly frank."

"Certainly." The mother, tossed about from thought to thought and at the mercy of Jenks's coolness, had now compounded with him the offence of falsehood. "And there are other objections?" she said scathingly.

"Well, yes," returned the young man, clasping his knee. "My father — I don't want to be disloyal to him, but he entertains some very narrow views about people in the East. I have often been cautioned by him. And, I assure you, just as soon as I notified him that I had accepted such a proposal as your daughter

has made to me he would at once make exhaustive inquiries as to your family!"

"He would find," said Mrs. Sexton, exultingly, "that no family had better standing in this part of the world. I am sure I do not lack a proper sense of humor when I tell you that the Sextons have been in Massachusetts since Governor Winthrop's time."

"But your son — John — has told me that they were smugglers during Colonial days."

"It is not substantiated. And, as for my own branch of the family, there is no question. You force me to say it. The estate has descended from generation to generation without a single instance of profligacy or lack of proper standing."

"I am delighted to hear it," Jenks interrupted politely. "And I know that the Sextons, being conservative investors, have always retained their wealth. That is something to be considered, of course."

"In regard to your affection for my daughter?" gasped the lady.

"No, in regard to my father's approval of the match." He spoke in a quiet, comfortable drawl.

"What?" cried Mrs. Sexton.

"Why, perhaps I ought to explain. My poor father has such strange views. He is so snobbish. You see, he raises cantaloups and is very successful. The traditions of our family are well established. The very first rule, Mrs. Sexton, is that the men should pass

their life in constructive labor. My father would be terribly shocked if he knew I had married into a family of investors. 'A man should work as hard as his money,' he says. I've often heard him. Perhaps he is a bit too bigoted, but he dislikes men who never created anything."

"The Colonel, I suppose —"

"Oh, Mrs. Sexton, you are making this so hard for me. You must see how much I love your daughter, and you know that she loves me. It is too bad to treat such — what shall I call it? — a tragedy with irony. Oh, I only wish I dared to face my father's wrath."

"Ah," Mrs. Sexton breathed. "That is the kind of spirit that is in your blood? My own daughter has more courage in her little finger than you have in your whole —"

"Don't!" Jenks exclaimed. He drew his hand quickly away from one of the wire-haired terriers which was attempting to lick it.

"Perhaps, then, you share in your father's views?" suggested Mrs. Sexton, who had now lost her head completely.

"No," cried the young man earnestly. "It would make no difference even if I did. I love Julianna better than anything in the world. She is everything to me. I don't want to seem dramatic, but, Mrs. Sexton, I would almost give my life to win her. Why, if she were taken out of her closely guarded, stifling life she would

blossom into a wonderful woman! What difference does it make that the Colonel is fat? What difference should it make that you are all of the idle rich and anti-imperialists besides? My father is a narrow-minded, intolerably snobbish man — forgive me, Mrs. Sexton — I know it."

"I should be inclined to agree with you," she said in the pause. Once more she had assumed the cool, even voice of her tribe. The happiness of Julianna seemed the only important thing in the world. "Mr. Jenks, you have made my daughter suffer. You either should have concealed your affection for her or —"

"Huh!" cried he with startling suddenness, springing up from his seat. "I am a man again. If Julianna ever will give me another chance, will act differently. I will accept her."

"I think it is you who should take the initiative," screamed Mrs. Sexton in final unrestrained fury. She rose from her chair and swung majestically through the front doorway.

"I'll do it," sang out the young man. "Don't go away, Mrs. Sexton. It makes no difference what it costs — I'll do it!"

But Mrs. Sexton, red and breathless, was toiling up the stairs in a dudgeon.

At the top she stopped for several moments to collect her wits. She wondered if she were really she. Then she opened her daughter's door.

Julianna was leaning out the open window, a shawl about her shoulders.

"My girl!" exclaimed her mother. "What are you doing?"

Julianna laughed over her shoulder. "Making love, mamma, if you must know," she whispered.

"Making love!"

"Yes, we're engaged now. He asked me from the lawn. He said that both of you agreed that it should be done."

"The monster!" said Mrs. Sexton.

"Yes, mamma. My monster."

"Julianna," her mother said, "shut the window. You'll catch your death. Come here, dear. You've been a foolish girl; I want you to put your arms about me, dear. I'm more nervous than I can tell you. You're such a little girl, after all. I'm glad your father is coming back to-morrow. I hardly know what he will say."

The Colonel and John did, in fact, return the next afternoon.

"Bless my soul!" said the former when he had heard all. "Have you given the matter full consideration?"

"Certainly," said Mrs. Sexton.

A curious little wrinkle appeared at the corner of the Colonel's eyes. "You do not suppose that, using a slang phrase, they 'put up a job on you'?" he suggested.

His wife's lips compressed themselves into the danger line. "I hardly know what you mean," she said coldly.

THE ONE WITH THE RED-BROWN HAIR

THE story of Elaine Quinn was told in the tea room of the Red Hotel on the Avenue late one winter afternoon. The architect thought it unpleasant and afterward commented upon the listless way in which Mrs. Colvin-Everhard placed it before us. The other man was a lawyer and a professional cynic and yet he believed the story and it awoke something new in him that put fire in his eyes for a moment and made him clench the hand that held his cigarette. Miss Gaylord, the second woman, saw that he was momentarily stirred for some other than a selfish reason, and she afterward said that it furnished her the real reason for marrying him. But of course Elaine Quinn will never know it. She will never even know that the lawyer believes the story about her is all true.

She, on one hand, and Mrs. Everhard and Miss Gaylord, who married the lawyer, on the other, were totally different kinds of women. This Elaine, so Mrs. Everhard said, began by being a rather awkward country girl. She would have furnished an extraordinary contrast to these smart women with their pencilled eyebrows.

When she was eighteen and her mother had taken all that remained of the money to be buried, Elaine found herself, as the neighbors said, "all out of folks." She had to seek great opportunities: she had to go to New York, where there was plenty of employment for women.

Elaine went. May we suppose that two or three second cousins and a feeble-minded old grandaunt came down to the station to say good-by to her? They saw that her cheap trunk, bought at the Emporium, was put on the train, they noted the flush of youth in her cheeks. Indeed, she was so healthy and strong and pretty! She kissed them all. They were relieved that she was going to shift for herself. "Good-by, Elie. Good-by!" None of them would have believed that her career would be what it turned out to be. "Be a good girl," said the feeble-minded old aunt, sniffling. And so the puffing train left the junction station and started onward to the city.

Some would think Elaine Quinn's story was a very conventional story indeed. Others think it very astonishing and shocking. It all depends on the listener. Except for the fact that she was so perfect a specimen of young girl and wore about her, like invisible mantles, so much simple truth and modesty, she was a good deal like the regular country girls who come down to the city from the story books. And her entry into New York was like the others.

It was the same uninteresting story of finding a fur-

nished room and then counting the fifty-seven saved dollars to be sure they had not been vanished by some of the dangerous magic of the city, about which the uninitiated "up state" have such vague ideas. Elaine did not know how little money this really was.

She knew no one in New York except a girl named Paula Van Reuter — who had been a waitress at the Pine Knoll summer hotel — and she had lost the address. There was nothing to do that evening or all day Sunday unless she sat down to cry. But Elaine was not of the tearful sort and so she went about the task of trying to make her dingy room look homelike. She had photographs of four girl friends in her cheap trunk, and she rearranged them on the walls an unbelievable number of times. There was one picture already hanging above the head of the bed — an ideal photographic study of Priscilla at a spinning wheel, with an elaborate gilt frame that unmistakably would have suggested to some of us either trading stamps or five-and-ten-cent stores. To Elaine it was pretty. And besides she had a picture of her own, framed in passe-partout style — a delineation of a young woman and a young man sitting close, close together on a moonlit beach, gazing off across a pen-and-ink ocean. It would have been hard for Elaine to explain why she bought this picture of a peddler a year before. She merely realized that there was a subtle suggestion of almost unbelievable happiness in the picture. That was all. No such young

man had ever sat with her gazing out across the sea. In fact no young man — The picture was a beautiful mystery. She hung it over the gas-jet.

She went on rearranging things — the fancy quilt her mother had made and the pictures and the two books on the table, and she went down to the clattering restaurant in the basement next door for her three meals, so that it was not until Sunday, as dusk was falling and the lights on the street below poked out foggily through the mist-laden air, that the first touch of the urban drunkenness came upon her. She realized, with a little audible gasp, that she was without responsibility.

No one was anywhere about to question her. She was free! She could go forth, as she had not yet done, to sway through the thoroughfares with the flow of the rest of the hordes of unknown, unrecognized, and terribly free pedestrians. She might make faces at people who went by on the back platforms of cars and they would never see her again. She might stay out until any time and no one would ever whisper about her. She had now become her own government, and in her power to direct herself she had endless and simple faith. Now she could see, hear, smell, and touch what she chose, and every nerve in her body sang of freedom. Who could say nay?

To-morrow she would find employment. The landlady, who apparently was a person eternally cooking cauliflower in the dark kitchen downstairs, had said

there was only one thing an untrained girl could do — work in a department store.

"Will ye keep the room you've got or take the little one on to the top floor?" she asked, being familiar with the situation.

Elaine laughed wholesomely and ignorantly. She assured the stout keeper of the furnished-room house that she had just "got fixed" and she would not move for some time.

"Oh, well, it's none of my business," said the other. "You know your own affairs." But when Elaine started out in pursuit of work on Monday morning, she took another searching look at her from behind the starchy lace curtains of the parlor room.

It goes on being a commonplace story in a way. For Elaine could not find work on Monday. One said that only skilled saleswomen were employed; another promised a place when the holiday season was on. An employment agent of a store on Sixth Avenue asked her if she lived at home. "No?" He was a little pudgy man with grotesquely fat fingers. "Have an income of your own?" Elaine almost laughed. The little beady eyes shone an honest, kindly light suddenly as he said: "Why not go back — away from New York altogether?" She remembered, several years later, how he had dismissed her, and then she understood him better.

Tuesday it was the same. In the afternoon she was

tempted beyond resistance by the phonograph in front of a moving picture show. She went in and the time flew by. A week later she had a brave record of the places she had visited. It was written on the bottom of her box of stationery, though she might as well have used a sheet of paper itself inasmuch as she had no one to whom she could write. By this time the freedom of herself had become a strangely fearful thing — a thing of unknown terrors. She was even innocent of any knowledge of the fear itself. She only knew that up and down, up and down went the emotions and the pictures before the mind — the joy of irresponsibility and then the horror of it and of loneliness, the picture of a gorgeous drama and pageant, the picture of a hopeless swirl of nameless humanity. The money had shrunk to forty-two dollars and some change. It was easy to see the end of it.

A very, very wise person would have gone back to Pinetop village. Elaine was eighteen and not among the very wise persons. She was not even a sociologist. She found that she could get several places in stores which would pay her four or five dollars a week, but she had assumed that this amount, no doubt enough in Pinetop, would not keep her alone in New York. Her room cost two dollars and seventy-five cents and her meals a little more than that. Perhaps other girls could manage better. Think of the number of them whom she had seen behind the rows and

rows of counters! She looked at her money again and found there was twenty-four dollars and a five-cent piece. She needed a new pair of shoes.

New York was lonely, in spite of all its liberty. Somehow there was a suspicion that liberty meant slavery. She rearranged the photographs of the four homely girl friends. The red-striped wall paper had become tiresome now; it had been exciting at first. Elaine thought of the feeble-minded old grandaunt back home and laughed at the idea that she wanted to cry. The cars clanged along down at the corner. She looked at herself in the mirror. And then she glanced up at the girl in the pen-and-ink drawing, and in a moment more, awaking suddenly, she realized that it was now time to go out again to look for a place.

She tried Deering and Co. — that tremendous emporium! They had advertised in the paper in the want column, and the size of type they used, in contrast to the other advertisements, suggested their dire need of employees. Elaine had to look in a telephone book to see where the store was, because, although she had been there once, it had now become lost in the mighty nightmare of store memories.

This was a wonderful day of clear cold sunlight. Her eyes shone with vitality as she walked along the street; her cheeks were red with the wind, her step was as full of innocent strength as the step of Diana.

Mrs. Colvin-Everhard, going on with her story, said

that Elaine had to see an assistant employment agent at so large an establishment. Apparently the employment agent merely was under a duty to employ employment agents and to draw up charts with curves and diagrams to show the wages paid by departments and the relation of these figures to the sales and the comparative efficiency of men and women per unit of cost per hour and other things of the sort which business men call "system."

It was the assistant employment agent, therefore, who looked at Elaine with frank admiration. His eye detected no powder or other beautifiers; his nose caught no whiff of perfumery. He was an intensely selfish young man who improved his mind and body every evening at a Young Man's Christian Something and had absurdly sloping shoulders, fifteen-inch biceps, completely muscle-bound, watery blue eyes and a pale yellow round of hair outside of a pink bald spot. He was a selfish, model young man, but he was discriminating. He liked Elaine because her beauty was honest. He offered her a "position."

He had spoken to other applicants of "jobs," but the higher-sounding word seemed more fitting when connected with an actual opening.

Now he rapped with his pencil on his teeth and said, "I think I will put you on work at the notion counter."

"Excuse me," said Elaine with her pretty mouth, "what will I get a week?"

He put his long, bony forefinger upon a printed sheet

which lay before him on his desk and with it found a figure. He tapped on this figure as if to emphasize the fact that some immutable determination had fixed it there forever.

"Five," said he.

Elaine's blue eyes sought his. "I am new here," she said. "It doesn't seem as if I could get along — I mean, live — on that. You know better than I do about what the girls without homes have to have here. Can I live on five?"

Fate played a trick then. For it was a part of Carleton D. Deering's personal "system" to be at the store for two hours every morning and with a swift but regal step walk about, visiting the departments. And now here he was. He had made a sudden appearance, standing at the shoulder of this young man, who did not see him because he was gazing back into Elaine's eyes, trying to frame an answer to her question.

Deering was a vigorous, well-fed looking individual, not beyond middle age, who was as pink and fresh as if he had just come from a cold bath and a rubdown. He wore a little orchid in his buttonhole. Elaine knew instinctively that it was he. And besides she had seen in one of the Sunday papers a picture of him and a picture of his estate on Long Island and one of his New York house and one of his greenhouses and another of his kennels and a sixth of his steam yacht. She wished that she had read the article about how he had

made his fortune. But here he was — the great C. D. Deering himself.

Somehow the question "Can I live on five?" still seemed to reverberate on the air about the employment desk. The young man still was hesitating for his answer when he saw his chief out of the corner of his eye, and jumped to his feet.

"Mr. Deering!" he said with a respectful exclamation.

The mighty proprietor beamed upon him with a sort of desperate kindness. "Good morning," he said. "Go right ahead with the young lady."

He had spoken; but at this moment it occurred to Elaine that, as she was about to take so important a step, she had better consult an eminent authority which chance had placed before her. She looked squarely at Deering, who had heard her question, and said, "Can I?"

"This gentleman will give you all information," returned the great one.

"But I wanted to ask you," she said quickly.

"Me!" exclaimed Deering. With a covert glance he discovered that the employment agent now had drawn up his selfish face into a dry, cynical, and irritating smile, as if delighted that the burden of an answer had been shifted.

Deering beamed upon Elaine as he had beamed upon the young man. He thought it best.

"You have not been here long?" he inquired.

"No," said Elaine. "I have no folks and I don't know much about cities and stores. I thought you'd tell me."

Deering seemed to reflect a moment. Then he threw his head up impatiently and snorted.

"Try it!" he said.

When he had gone the young man gave Elaine a card to fill out.

"Profits in this store are not economic — they are social," he said, as if to himself.

"What?" said Elaine.

"You have beautiful red-brown hair," said the cold young man.

Elaine was very angry with him for saying it.

No one can tell very much about Elaine's story during the months that followed. It is only useful to know, as Mrs. Colvin-Everhard said, that it was not until the selfish young man, by two or three slow promotions, had become the glove buyer, that her existence ever entered the mind of that Napoleon of Emporiums, C. D. Deering.

"John," said he one morning to the glove buyer, beaming upon him, "I notice on the curve sheet that we are not doing as usual with the cheaper long-length suèdes. And, now that I think of it, that imported line that came in yesterday" — he paused to allow his

employee to be impressed with his personal knowledge of the details of his business — "I say that imported line is a beautiful color — an odd color. I never saw any color like it — Huh! Yes. Do you remember a girl that was in your office two years ago looking for a job — with reddish-brown hair? Where did she go?"

The buyer's mouth was full of two words which he felt devilishly inclined to say, but he only said, "She went."

"Home?"

"Hardly."

It seems too bad to break the story up, but it must be done because between times no one but Elaine knows. Then too the break has another disadvantage, as the architect said who listened to the story, for it makes the ending perfectly obvious. This is a crime in fiction but not in a chronicle.

Anyway it was not so very long after Mr. Deering had the conversation with the former employment agent, whose pink bald spot had by that time grown larger, when, one morning as the dry-goods prince was sitting at the massive mahogany desk in his richly furnished and wainscoted holy of holies, his son came in.

This was his only boy — a healthy, fine-looking young man, almost through college, enthusiastic about life, unrestrained, and Deering loved him much. His own hair was getting gray and the unsophisticated, now seri-

ous, now irresponsible nature of the son rejoiced the life of the older man. He did not care much whether the youngster, now already twenty-one, turned out to be a good executive of department stores or not, if by being the dreamer that he was he would go on ever perpetuating the glad nature of his dead mother.

"For heaven's sake, boy, when did you get home and why?" cried old Deering with new vitality in his voice.

"I came over this morning," said the younger man. His upper lip quivered a little. He seemed to be excited and half frightened.

"Well —" said his father a little anxiously.

"Do you know?"

"What? I know nothing. What?"

Out burst the story then — a cornucopia of words and ideas, all the doubts and all the assurance in the young fellow's nature. "I should have told you, I know. It was awful to do it that way — you'll see what I mean. Don't jump to any conclusions. You'll be awfully angry at first. You won't like her. But you will! You must! She's had such an awfully hard time!"

Deering turned white. He sat down at his desk. His voice was dead.

"Tell me what you have to tell. Put it so I can understand what you're driving at."

"Yes, sir. You see she is an actress. She is an actress with a fearfully cheap burlesque show. It was

awful to have a girl like that in such a position—awful! Because she is simply *great* herself — you know what I mean — anybody would love her! And she wanted to know if I could forgive everything about her and I told her yes and she told me — and, my God, I would too! She said I was the only one she'd ever known that could love unselfishly. She said that I was a little fool. But she told me something else. These were her words: 'In all my life since I left home, when I worked and afterward, you are the only real man and Christian I ever met, and when I find you you are such a goose!'"

The boy stopped. His voice had broken. He stood with clenched hands before his father's desk, behind which the elder Deering sat, his head held up by conscious effort, his lips caught between his teeth.

"But you don't know!" exclaimed the boy, the words rushing forth again. "You don't know how lonely she is and poor and terribly, terribly out of the place where she belongs. It was awful. And even then when I offered her everything, she tried to send me away — she tried — oh, Dad! — she tried to kill herself. She loved me! Can't you see? She knew I had money and everything too. I told her. She knew. But I'd lied to her about my name. I just met her by chance at first and I was afraid. Don't you understand, I had lied to her — lied to her like a cur — to her who wouldn't marry me — who wouldn't marry me because she loved me too well."

"She wouldn't marry you?" said the older man, clawing at his desk top. "Then —"

"Wait," cried the son. "It was that lie. I believe it. Money and position didn't tempt her. She was too noble. But when that lie was wiped away — oh! it was different! I told everything, my name and who I was. And then she prayed to know what to do. I overheard her praying, I tell you! And I think something none of us know must have spoken to her. For she said 'Yes.' And, Dad, we were married yesterday!"

The elder Deering pressed both of his hands upon his chest and his head bent forward as if his neck had lost its power. Walking to the door the young man flung it open. With a look of utmost respect he said, "Elaine, dear," and she came in.

She had changed, of course. A dullness had settled all over her. There were puffs of skin beneath her eyes. On the whole she was not at all the same.

But when Deering raised his eyes, he cried out, in instant recognition, "The red-brown hair!"

"Yes, sir," said Elaine, in a thick voice. "I was one of the profits of the business. And now," her voice had become seemingly gay, "I'm back in the store!"

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